CHRIST
The
INCOMPARABLE

W. B. RILEY

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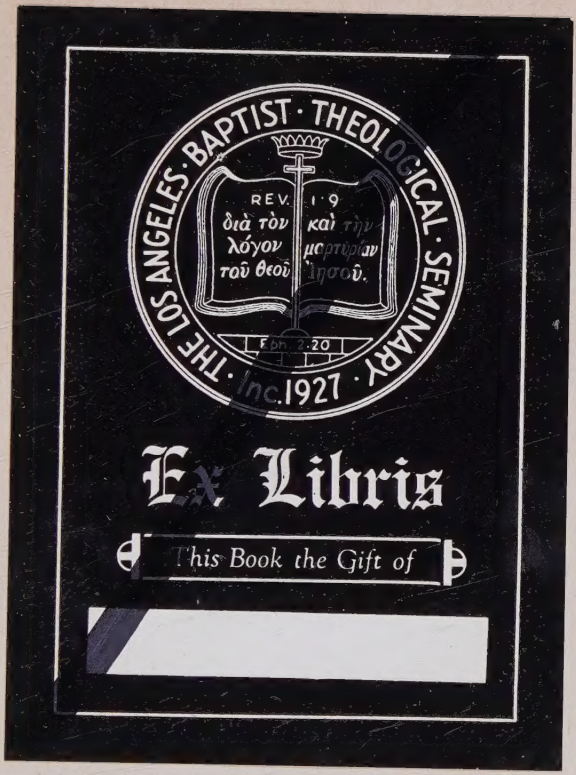
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CHRIST THE INCOMPARABLE

Christ
the
Incomparable

By
W. B. RILEY, D.D.
Pastor, First Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minn.
Author of "The Crisis of the Church," "The Evolution of the Kingdom," "The Menace of Modernism," etc.

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Foreword

THE chapters of this volume were prepared separately in time and independently in object, and were delivered from the pulpit of the First Baptist Church, Minneapolis. We now assemble them for publication, inspired by the hope that they may, in published form, instruct and strengthen a greater multitude.

Beyond question, Christ is the citadel of Christianity. So long as His name remains the incomparable one of the earth, just that long Christianity stands as the one and only sufficient religion.

That the crown of glory shall ever be taken from His brow we have no fears whatever. Modernism will no more succeed in effectually sealing Him in a tomb than did the Romans, or in discrediting His claims than did the Jews.

As His Word "is forever settled in heaven," so must His claim of Deity be forever settled for earth.

If this volume accomplishes for any considerable number of readers both a confirmation of faith in Christ and an increased affection for Him, the author will be well content.

W. B. R.

Minneapolis, Minn.

Contents

I. The Christ of Prophecy . . . 9

II. Christ, the Virgin-Born . . . 29

III. The Childhood of Christ . . . 47

IV. Christ, the Teacher 63

V. Christ's First Apostles . . . 76

VI. The Miracles of Christ . . . 95

VII. The Ministry of Christ . . . 115

VIII. The Mission of Christ 131

IX. The Atonement of Christ . . . 151

X. Christ's Resurrection and Ascension 164

XI. Christ, the Incomparable . . . 181

XII. Christ and the Changing Order . 199

I

THE CHRIST OF PROPHECY

"Unto us a child is born; unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."—Isa. 9:6.

THERE is much in Isaiah that must be referred to the shadows, owing to the degeneracy of the times in which he lived; still, when the light does break, it floods the page with glory, for it is the light from the face of the Messiah of prophecy. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, speaking from the phrase "His name shall be called Wonderful," compares this text to a storm at sea which he had just witnessed. It was a dark night and the sky was covered with clouds, and thunder answered to thunder, and lightning's flash but left a deeper darkness on all the waters, when he noticed far away on the horizon, as if miles distant, a bright spot shining like gold. It was the moon breaking through a rift in the clouds, and while she could not shine where the prophet of God stood, he could behold the spot far distant upon which her mellow rays fell in beauty. And he

thought of Isaiah when all about him was thick darkness and the very air was charged with the thunders of God's anger, and the lightnings of His vengeance, and yet he could say "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death upon them hath the Light shined," by anticipating the hour when the text of this chapter would be the truth.

No one can read the Major Prophets, or for that matter, the Minor Prophets of the Old Testament, without appreciating how dark were their days. All that they were privileged to see with the natural eye was apostasy and captivity, with all the evil consequences of both. But they never despaired, because the last man of them entertained "the glorious hope" voiced in this text. They knew their time to be that dark hour which presages the coming day. In other words, they believed in the Christ to come. If to us Christmas is a memorial, to them it was an anticipation. And as we look back to the manger and the Cross, they looked forward to both. Our prophets are imploring us to "believe on the Christ who came," at all seasons their prophets were pointing them to "the Christ who was to come," as witness the words of Isaiah spoken more than seven hundred years before the birth of the Wonderful One, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Ever-

lasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever." (R. V.)

Now, following the suggestion of the text, we see four things:

I. THE COMING OF CHRIST.

"Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given" Isaiah has before spoken of this wondrous child. To the house of David he had addressed these words, "The Lord himself will give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat" (7:14-15).

He knew, then, that He was to come in the flesh—born of a woman. He not only prophesies his humility in that He was to be born of a virgin; but the hardships of his life in that He was to subsist upon "butter and honey," for butter and honey are the products of that land which the people ate when all else had failed. The true humanity of Jesus is suggested also by the phrase, "Unto us a child is born." As Jesus said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh." Paul, in his epistle to the Philippians, speaks of Christ Jesus "who existing in the form of God emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the

likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (2:6-7). But "the form of a man" would not indicate the nature. There might be a sinless, there might be a sinful servant. This same apostle, however, in his epistle to the Hebrews, says, "Since then the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he also himself in like manner partook of the same. . . . For verily not to angels doth he give help, but he giveth help to the seed of Abraham. Wherefore it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren" (2:14, 16-17). While to the Romans Paul writes, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh; that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit." Every man may feel, therefore, that when Christ was born He descended sufficiently deep to lay hold upon his condition, and lend him help. He who was equal with the Father for our sakes became as one of us, that He might bring us to God.

Dr. Lorimer, in one of his volumes, speaks of the Christian's influence in the Roman Empire. He treated the Goth, the Persian and the Roman as if they were one until they themselves came to see that they were "made of one blood." And Lorimer remarks "As a result of this growing conviction,

Caracalla conferred the dignity of Roman citizenship upon the civilised world. The day when this famous edict was issued has been considered one of the epoch-making days of history. Nor can its significance be over-estimated; it was in a sense the Coronation Day of Humanity. It recognised the essential greatness of man's nature." But do we not believe that the great Coronation Day of Humanity occurred when Jesus was born " in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh "? That day recognised the essential degradation of Humanity, but by the act of God in Christ, lifted the same up to its Coronation. And not a child has been born since that need lead a hopeless life or die a hopeless death.

Isaiah knew, also, that he was to come from God—begotten by the Holy Ghost. As Jesus said to Nicodemus, " That which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Therein is the explanation of the angel's words to Mary, " The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee; wherefore also the holy thing which is begotten shall be called the Son of God " (Luke 1:35). John, in his first epistle, (3:5) says of Jesus, " And ye know that he was manifested to take away sins; and in him is no sin," and explains by verse nine, " Whosoever is begotten of God doeth no sin because his seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin because he is begotten of God." The humanity of Jesus, therefore, harmonised perfectly

with His essential deity. And it is one of the marvels of inspiration that Isaiah saw and expressed this harmony when he said, "For unto us a child is born, and unto us a son is given."

He was born of a virgin; He was given of God—"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." That is why Jesus could say unto the Jews, "Ye are from beneath, I am from above: ye are of this world, I am not of this world." And that is why Jesus could make claim of wisdom, might and power, which would have been blasphemy upon the lips of another. Such, for instance, as "I am the Way," "I am the Truth," "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," "Except ye believe that I am he, ye shall die in your sins," "I am the door of the sheep," "I am the good shepherd," "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name that will I do." That is why Jesus could lay claim upon the consciences and to the obedience of men, saying, "Ye are my friends if ye do the things which I command you." His colossal claim, "All power in heaven and in earth is given unto me," accorded perfectly with His command, "As ye go preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give."

We may have a debt of gratitude to the Unitarians and Universalists, and other Liberalists for having laid beautiful emphasis upon the humanity

of Jesus, but they have also imposed upon us the painful necessity of uttering repeated warnings against forgetting or denying the essential deity of Jesus. With Comte, too many are now tempted to believe that the only religion is "the religion of Humanity," by which, as one of our greatest preachers has remarked, "They mean a religion without a revelation, and even without a God." The work of those critics who propose to give us a human Christ is no less a denial of His deity because they happen to cover His humanity with speeches fair as midsummer flowers. We are told that the executioner who beheaded Charles I. bowed before His majesty, kissed his hand, and begged pardon for undertaking the unpleasant commission in which he was engaged. But the king's head came off just the same. Not a few of our critics seem to have studied this bit of history to a purpose and when they propose to decapitate Christianity by removing its Head, the Christ who is "very God," they proceed with specious words and extravagant compliments to the humanity of Jesus, but deny His deity just the same. Utter what compliments they may, the Holy Ghost answers their words—"Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?" (I John 2:22), and again of Jesus Christ, "This is the true God and eternal life" (I John 5:20). If the humanity of Jesus is essential to our Christian characters, and it is, the deity of Jesus is our only hope of salvation; for if we

have trusted in a man and not in God our hope is in vain and we are yet in our sins. But Isaiah says not only "Unto us a child is born," but, also, "unto us a son is given."

II. THE CROWNING OF CHRIST.

"And the government shall be upon his shoulders," reference to the insignia of office which is worn on the shoulder where it marks the high official and also suggests his power to sustain that which is committed unto him. Isaiah himself gives us this very interpretation of his own words when he speaks of Eliakim, who was to be a "father to the inhabitants of Jerusalem and to the house of Judah," and of whom the Lord of hosts says, "I will commit thy government into his hands—and the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder."

Keeping this in mind, permit three suggestions concerning the crowning of Christ:

He shall govern God's people. This Coming One is more often described under the single phrase "the king of Israel" than by any other of the marvelous and many sentences employed to depict Him. If one trace the Scriptures through he will find that when He sets up His throne it will be in the midst of His own people, children of Abraham by flesh, and children of Abraham by faith. "When the tabernacle of God is with men he shall dwell with them and they shall be his peoples."

He shall govern absolutely and alone. "The government shall be upon his shoulder." The exclusiveness of Jesus' reign is signally set forth in the seventy-second Psalm, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea; and from the River unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall render tribute; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; All nations shall serve him." It is related that the king of Prussia visited a village school and was welcomed by the children. Having spoken to them, he took an orange from a plate and asked, "To what kingdom does this belong?" "To the vegetable!" Then a piece of money. "To the mineral kingdom," answered a little girl. "And to what kingdom do I belong?" questioned the king. Upon a little reflection the child answered, "To God's Kingdom, sire." It is said that tears came to the king's eyes. As he placed his hand gently on the child's head he said, "God grant that I may be counted worthy of that kingdom." And the time is coming when every king of the earth, instead of sitting in the place of power, shall prostrate himself at Jesus' feet, for it is written, "As I live, saith the Lord, to me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Rom. 14:11).

He shall govern with authority and power. The

mark of office upon His shoulder is the sign of His authority, while the shoulder itself is the place and symbol of power. It was Jesus who said, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and on earth," and who claimed for Himself, "Henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of Power." Authority and Power—He shall govern with both. They belong to the very office which He holds, they are essential to the success of the King. I remember that in Hood's "Cromwell," chapter twelve, when the Scots invited the return of Charles II., and were defeated by the army of Cromwell, Hood remarks, "It certainly does appear that David Leslie, the Commander of the Scots at Dunbar, found his hands tied by a committee, and any kind of battle anywhere may be lost, but probably no battle of any kind was ever gained by a committee." The King—Christ—takes His opinions from no other. You will remember the astonishment that the teaching of Jesus created because "he taught them as one having authority and not as their scribes." And with that authority there is coupled power.

How many men there are now who feel absolutely bound by every word which Jesus speaks. They recognise His right to utter what He will and His power to enforce His least wish. There was a time when Hildebrand was not only a person of authority, but also of power. He could even leave the Emperor of Germany, himself, standing outside

the gate of his castle at Canossa, barefoot in the snow, begging for mercy from the man who professed to be the Vicar of Christ. But where is that authority and where is that power now? It passed, as did all his splendid pretensions. Nobody cares what Hildebrand said, for his arm of flesh, like his magnificent robes, rests now in the dust. Not so with Christ, upon whom God has laid the insignia of authority and power! He commands more men today than ever before. He exercises, today, all the power of the Godhead. And yet He has only commenced to command; He has revealed but a little of His power. Wait until the government is laid upon His shoulder, and He is crowned King of kings, and Lord of lords, "then will he stretch out his hand over the sea, and shake the kingdoms."

III. THE CHARACTER OF CHRIST.

According to the pen of Inspiration this character is four-fold, the "Wonderful Counsellor," the "Mighty God," the "Everlasting Father," and "The Prince of Peace." George Adam Smith doubts if these four names prove incontrovertibly that the prophet had an absolutely Divine Person in view; but we cannot share Smith's scepticism. These words can never be applied to another than the KING of kings, the LORD of lords, who though the Son is yet "the very God."

The Wonderful Counsellor. In the original this

is a compound word, and expresses what is with Isaiah a favourite feature of the "Coming One's" character. It is the same idea he expresses when he says concerning the increase of the ground, "This also cometh forth from Jehovah of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel." Spurgeon, in his sermon on "The Wonderful Counsellor," reminds us that Jesus is God's counsellor. He sits in the cabinet council of the King of Heaven. He was there when God said "Let us make man in our own image." He was there when the subjects of grace were determined. He was there when the plan of the ages was perfected. "And yet," adds Spurgeon, "He is our Counsellor, a necessary Counsellor, a hearty Counsellor, a sweet Counsellor, and, thank God, a safe Counsellor." No wonder Spurgeon concluded his great sermon by saying, "Obey His counsel and you shall have to rejoice that you ever listened to His voice, for He is indeed the 'Wonderful-Counsellor.'"

The Mighty God. Here is another phrase of which the Holy Spirit seems fond. In the very next chapter we read of a "remnant that shall return, even the remnant of Jacob, unto the Mighty-God." It is not sufficient to speak of the authority and the power of Jesus, a weightier word is needed, a compound word which confounds His enemies and comforts His people—"The Mighty-God." I am glad for the thought of power suggested. I am still more glad for the deity affirmed. And we

know that Jesus has already so far filled up this description that Theodore Parker, though a liberal and a sceptic, was compelled to confess that fulness in these words, "Nazareth was no Athens where philosophy breathed in the circumambient air; it had neither Porch nor Lyceum; not even a School of the Prophets. There is God in the heart of this youth, that mightiest heart that ever beat; stirred with the spirit of God, how it wrought in His bosom."

The Everlasting Father. This is another of the prophet's favourite terms. It was Isaiah who wrote, "For thou art our Father, though Abraham knoweth us not and Israel doth not acknowledge us: thou, O Jehovah, art our Father, our Redeemer, from everlasting is thy name" (63:16). And yet again, "But now, O Jehovah, thou art our Father; we are the clay and thou our potter, and we are all the work of thy hand." It is blessed to couple the thought of Creator and Father in one. The working of principles may produce certain effects, but only a *person* can feel affection. When, therefore, we call the Creator "Our Father," we put a heart into that force which spake and the worlds were. And, oh, what a heart! Who can sound all the depth of the meaning of the word "father"? Who can search out all the fulness of a father's love? And if it be true that the affection of an earthly father is unspeakable, immeasurable, with what words shall we weigh that of our Christ

when He comes to us in the name of "the Everlasting Father"? It speaks to us not alone of redemption, but also of reconciliation. It means what Charles Wesley wrote:

"My God is reconciled;
His pardoning voice I hear;
He owns me for His child;
I can no longer fear:
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba Father, cry."

The Prince of Peace. It is intensely interesting to see how Isaiah keeps up this term "Peace." It is truly a theme with him. He prophesies "The Prince of Peace." He sings "Thou wilt keep him in perfect *peace* whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." He says of Jehovah, "Thou wilt ordain *peace* with us." He affirms of the work of righteousness, "It shall be *peace,*" and the effect of righteousness "quietness and confidence forever." He declares, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth *peace.*" And he rejoices with the children of Jehovah because "great shall be their *peace.*" And when he concludes his prophecy he writes of Jerusalem, the words of Jehovah, "Behold I will send *peace* to her like a river"; but he makes Jesus the Prince of all this peace.

There is a climax in all these phases of char-

acter; He is a "Wonderful Counsellor," He is "Mighty God," He is "the Everlasting Father," but He is, and, blessed be His Name, "The Prince of Peace." No wonder Morrison sang:

"The race that long in darkness pined
Have seen a glorious Light;
The people dwell in day, who dwelt
In death's surrounding night.

"To us a Child of hope is born,
To us a Son is given;
Him shall the tribes of earth obey,
Him all the hosts of heaven.

"His name shall be the Prince of Peace,
For evermore adored;
The Wonderful, the Counsellor,
The great and mighty Lord.

"His power, increasing, still shall spread;
His reign no end shall know;
Justice shall guard His throne above
And peace abound below."

IV. THE INCREASE OF CHRIST.

"Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever."

There shall be growth in His government. This idea may be interpreted in the light of past events.

There was a time when the followers of Jesus were few indeed. But "the little one" has already "become a thousand" and the "small one a strong nation." Those who think Christ's kingdom is now upon earth call our attention to this fact, and remind us that He governs everywhere. But who shall answer that heretic George Herron when he asks us to show him "a village, a town, a city, in which Christ rules"? And yet, the promise is that a time will come when He shall reign from sea to sea, and from the rivers unto the ends of the earth, when the government shall indeed be on His shoulder. And we hold that that government shall grow. Jacob Seiss, in his third volume on "The Apocalypse," discusses the perpetuity of "the race, and the ongoing of the redeemed," proving that "the earth abideth forever," and that those who are upon it when Jesus comes will only be an earnest of "the generations of the age of the ages" of which Paul speaks in Epesians 3:21.

That, also, is the explanation of the Apocalyptic vision, "After these things I saw, and behold a great multitude which no man could number, out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cry with a great voice, saying, Salvation unto our God who sitteth upon the throne; and unto the Lamb."

When Thomas Kelley sang,

"Hark! ten thousand harps and voices,
Sound the note of praise above;
Jesus reigns and heaven rejoices;
Jesus reigns, the God of Love;
See, He sits on yonder throne;
Jesus rules the world alone,"

he dealt in small figures, forgetting Isaiah's claim "of the increase of his government there shall be no end."

Peace also shall prevail in it increasingly. When Christ first comes all rebellion against Him will not be at an end. Read the twenty-fifth of Matthew; read the twentieth chapter of Revelation, and see also what the Apostle Paul means when he says, "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power, for he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet" (I Cor. 15:24, 25). Go back over the past and see the conflicts of the Christ; conflicts with false teachers and hypocritical followers in the first century; conflicts with arrogant bishops and evil emperors, in the fourth and fifth centuries; conflicts with a rising Roman Papacy in the sixth century; conflicts with the immoralities and spiritual deadness of the eleventh and twelfth centuries; conflicts with the false doctrines of the sixteenth century; in the commonwealth of the

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seventeenth; in the revolutions of the eighteenth; conflicts with the slavery and selfishness of the nineteenth. And yet, such a teacher as Newell Dwight Hillis tells us—"He has triumphed, as one knows who studies the conquest of the first century church, the Christian activities of the fourth and fifth centuries, the crusades of the eleventh and twelfth, the reformation of the sixteenth, the revolutions of the seventeenth, the emancipations and missions of the nineteenth." And Hillis remarks, "Christ has touched poverty and clothed it with power. He has touched marriage and turned it into romance and love; He is now ready to touch work and wages and make them sacraments of human fellowship."

But there is even a better hope. The absent Christ has accomplished this by His ever-present Spirit. The "Christ to come" by "the increase of his government" shall compass infinitely more. When Henry VII. was crowned King of England the army of the Duke of Richmond sang a hymn of praise to God, and Tytler's History tells us that "That auspicious day put an end to the civil war between the houses of York and Lancaster. By marrying the Princess Elizabeth, Henry united in his own person the interests and rights of both these families (his own and that of Edward IV.). The nation, under his wise and politic administration, soon recovered the wounds it had sustained in those unhappy contests, the parliaments which he

assembled made the most salutary laws, the people paid their taxes without reluctance, the nobles kept in due subordination." All of which brought to that government, now famed the world around, a peace and prosperity which has since made it the notable kingdom of the world. But who was Henry VII, and what were his laws when compared with the KING of whom our text speaks? "Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end." Why, then, should we not sing,

"Come, quickly come, great King of all
Reign all around us, and within;
Let sin no more our souls enthrall,
Let pain and sorrow die with sin;
Come, quickly come, for Thou alone
Canst make Thy scattered people one."

His government, also, shall increase in righteousness. "Of the increase of his government there shall be no end. And to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever." Do you remember how that Danish king Canute wrote to his English subjects, "I have vowed to God to lead a right life in all things, to rule justly and piously in my realm, and subjects, and to administer just judgment to all. If, heretofore, I have done aught but what was just, through headiness or negligence of youth, I am ready, with God's help, to amend it utterly." Jesus needs to add no such postscript to His declared purpose of ruling

with justice and with righteousness, for, as the four-and-twenty elders have affirmed of Him who sits upon the throne, "He is worthy." "With righteousness shall he judge the poor; and decide with equity for the meek of the earth. . . . Righteousness shall be the girdle of his waist, and faithfulness the girdle of his loins" (Isa. 11:4, 5).

"The zeal of Jehovah of hosts will perform this." Let us rejoice in the fact that God himself is back of the increase of the government of His Son. Its peace is as sure as His everlasting promise, and its righteousness is in keeping with His own character, while of His Christ, studied in the light of this text, we may sing with Richard Gilder:

"Behold Him now where He comes!
Not the Christ of our subtle creeds,
But the light of our hearts, of our homes,
Of our hopes, our prayers, our needs;
The brother of want and blame,
The lover of women and men,
With a love that puts to shame,
All passions of mortal ken.

"Ah, no, Thou life of the heart,
Never shalt Thou depart!
Not till the leaven of God
Shall lighten each human clod;
Not till the world shall climb
To Thy heights serene, sublime,
Shall the Christ who enters our door
Pass, to return no more."

II

CHRIST, THE VIRGIN-BORN

"Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph, her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: *for he shall save his people from their sins."*—MATT. 1: 18-21.

THE whole force of destructive criticism has been directed against the supernatural, whether that be found in the claims of sacred Scripture or in those of Jesus of Nazareth. The purpose of this criticism is to disprove the supernatural at every possible point. The so-called constructive criticism behaves little better. It expresses admiration for the Bible by way of introduction to objections to be raised against it; and it pays high compliment to Jesus of Nazareth in order that its professed friendliness may

render its denial of His deity less offensive to the faithful.

In the present discussion we propose a clear issue: Was Christ begotten by the Holy Ghost? The Scripture from which we start clearly and distinctly answers that question, and yet there are those who dispute its authority.

In answer to their objections I propose three lines of argument:

I. THE FORCE OF OLD TESTAMENT PROPHECY.

This is the argument to which the Sacred writer himself appeals, "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet." Joseph Parker has said truly, "God does not work extemporaneously; the suddenness of His movements is only apparent; every word He says comes up from eternity." The good student of His movements will come upon types and shadows of things to come. That is not so much true of any other part of the entire book called "the Bible" as of that which pertains to the Christ.

His coming was plainly predicted. "The Lord himself shall give you a sign: Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14). "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the

everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever" (Isa. 9:6-7). "Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him" (Isa. 62:11). "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel: whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:4). Zechariah had a vision of Him as He rode triumphantly into Jerusalem, and wrote, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation: lowly, and riding upon an ass and upon a colt the foal of an ass" (Zech. 9:9).

The time will come when all men shall know the meaning of prophecy. Dr. Albert Barnes tells us that "The visitor today looks on the site of ruined Petra, or the desolate scenes where once the city of Tyre spread out its bazaar-crowded thoroughfares, contemplates the waste places of Jerusalem, and hears the Jews at the 'weeping stone' bewailing the destruction of their magnificent temple, wanders through the exhumed ruins of Nineveh and

catches a glimpse of 'the wild beasts of the desert,' the doleful creatures, the owls, that dwell in Babylon, and decides for himself whether the prophets 'spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost' when they foretold the destinies of these great centers of life and activity."

The man who travels through the Old Testament Scriptures and studies the predictions regarding Messiah's coming, and then looks on the Man of Nazareth, can also decide whether they found their fulfillment in Him.

The man who invests his money in a mansion has a perfect right to compare the finished pile of stones and all the arrangements thereof, and all the material employed, with the drawings and specifications of the architect, and on condition that they answer point to point, accept the product; and the man who proposes to invest his faith in Jesus Christ has a right to study the Old Testament plans and specifications concerning His coming and character and reject Him if He does not fill them up to the letter.

The Old Testament prophets did more than predict the coming of Christ.

They predicted His character. He was to be "a righteous Branch" (Jer. 23:5). He was to "love righteousness and hate wickedness" (Ps. 45:7). He was not to "cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street" (Isa. 42:2). He was to be "a prophet from among his brethren."

Jehovah's "words were to be in his mouth," and He should "speak all that Jehovah commanded him" (Deut. 18:18). He was to "bear our griefs" and "carry our sorrows," to be "wounded for our transgressions" and "bruised for our iniquities," "the chastisement of our peace was to be upon him," and "with his stripes" we were to be "healed" (Isa. 4-5). He was to be a "priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:4).

True, the critics have attacked these prophecies and have tried to disprove their authenticity and authority. The more surely Christ's character has answered to these Old Testament descriptions feature to feature, the more have they inveighed against them. And yet, as one asks, "Which will you believe—critic or Christ?" Which appears to you as the more convincing, the marvelous agreement of Old Testament prophecy and New Testament history, or the arrogant, unproven claims of Twentieth Century critics?

Charles A. Briggs, heretic as many regarded him, never so far lost his reasoning faculties as to forget the force of prophetic argument. He says, "Hebrew prophecy presents us a system of instruction which cannot be explained from the reflections of the human mind. It gives us a review of redemption as the final goal of the world's history which is heavenborn. . . . Hebrew prophecy vindicates its relation to accuracy, its comprehensive ideality as the conception of a Divine mind, as the deliver-

ance of a Divine energy, as a system by holy men who 'spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost'; the Messiah of prophecy and the Messiah of history are not diverse but entirely harmonise in the Lamb who was 'foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifested in these latter times.'"

No wonder the apostle Peter wrote, "We have also a more sure word of prophecy whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn." No wonder it is written again of Christ, "To him gave all the prophets witness." Arthur T. Pierson said, "No miracle which He wrought so unmistakably set on Him the seal of God as the convergence of the thousand lines of prophecy in Him, as in one burning focal point of dazzling glory. Every sacrifice lit from Abel's altar until the last passover of the passion week pointed as with flaming fingers to Calvary's cross! Nay, all the centuries moved as in solemn procession to lay their tributes upon Golgotha."

These prophecies even promise His accomplishments. He was to be "the prophet of the Lord." He was to be "a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:4). He was to be a King reigning "in righteousness" (Isa. 32:1). He was to "delight" in the will of God (Ps. 40:8). "The Spirit of the Lord" was to "rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit

of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord" (Isa. 11:2). He was to be "anointed" to "preach good tidings unto the meek," sent to "bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn." In His day "the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. The heart also of the rash shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall be ready to speak plainly" (Isa. 61:1, 2 and 32:3-4).

Dr. Lorimer has portrayed, by a striking illustration sketched in contrast, Christ's battle with evil, "The battle which Miltiades waged on the plain of Marathon on behalf of Hellenic freedom was one of the most salient and far-reaching events in the cycle of human history. It not only decided the destiny of Athens, but it preserved Europe from the heavy chains of Asiatic slavery. Had it not been for Marathon, freedom would have expired. . . . Athens would have failed to be what she was to her own citizens, and though the Roman power might have spread over the world had Athenian civilisation been different, the Empire, untutored by Greek genius, would not have been the purveyor of arts as well as arms, of letters as well as laws to mankind. But still far easier would it have been for a sagacious statesman, standing in the region of

the Tetrapolis, or surveying the field from Mount Pentelicus, and reflecting on the defeat of the Persians, to anticipate and describe the results, comprehensive and wide-sweeping as they were fated to prove, of that glorious disaster, than it would have been for the most gifted and foreseeing of the race to imagine, much less to predict, the ultimate effect on society, government and humanity of that stern, sharp conflict between the Son of God and the hosts of darkness which gave to history the Christian religion."

And yet the effect produced by Christ in it all was foreseen, was foretold, and the man who denies that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Ghost must tell us how it happened that His accomplishments were promised hundreds of years before the "babe wrapped in swaddling clothes" was laid in the manger at Bethlehem, or before the Man capable of opening the eyes of the blind, unstopping the ears of the deaf, releasing the prisoner from his dungeon, bringing the acceptable year of the Lord had put in an appearance? We count it something of a marvel that modern science can tell us forty-eight hours in advance what changes will take place in the weather. How, then, can men do less than stand amazed before the work of those who, a thousand years before the event, promised the coming, predicted the character and described the accomplishments of Jesus of Nazareth? What is the explanation? Only this, that the same Spirit who

begat Him spake through these souls of Old Testament time.

I call attention to the second line of argument:

II. THE AFFIRMATION OF NEW TESTAMENT WRITERS

The sayings of these writers of the New Testament cannot be ignored. And what is the purport of them?

They declare that He was the Son of the Most High, "Now the birth of Jesus was on this wise; When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 1:18). Luke's report is, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

It is not necessary for one to explain how this came to pass. The Spirit of God is not subject to our psychological limitations. Jesus himself said of Him, "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). Christ was only the first begotten and the same Spirit begets many another.

No man can explain his own spiritual birth. Why, then, should we attempt to explain the beget-

ting of Jesus? If God could create man in the first place why should it be thought a thing incredible that He should, by His own will, have begotten the man Jesus? That He was the Son of God, Christ Himself never questioned. I met a Jew a while ago who told me that "Jesus never dreamed He was the Son of God; that was a claim which had been trumped up by the New Testament writers." Why, then, did Jesus speak of "My Father who is in heaven"? How did He dare to say, "I and my Father are one"? When they asked Him, "Art thou the Son of God?" why should He have replied, "Ye say it; I am"? "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." "No man knoweth the Father save the Son and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

Take His miracles; they are an evidence of His sense of Divine Sonship. To the leprous, "I will, be thou clean"; to the storm, "Peace, be still"; to His disciples, "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils, freely ye have received, freely give"; to Lazarus, "Come forth."

Take His teachings: "Moses said unto you" so and so, "But *I* say unto you." And again, "Verily, verily *I* say unto you." His word is that of One of conscious authority. Take His expression —"Thy sins are forgiven thee." Who dares say that but God? Blasphemy indeed it would have been on the lips of another. Think of His state-

ment to Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Think of His words regarding Jerusalem, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thee as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings and ye would not!" Think of His comprehensive words of authority, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

His disciples believed Him to be the Son of God, "Æneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole," was Peter's statement. "In the name of Jesus Christ, arise and walk," was the word to the man at the gate. Devils believed Him to be the Son of God: "Jesus, thou son of God," was the very phrase by which they addressed Him. "Why hast thou come to torment us before our time?" was the fear they expressed in His presence, and felt at the sight of His face. The centurion, seeing Him die, said, "Truly this man was the Son of God." Are professed Christians to be more sceptical than wicked men and devils?

Yet He was born to Mary—Joseph's wife. Christ was a man, essentially a man. Flesh clothed His bones; blood filled His veins. Had you put your ear to His heart it would have beat as the heart of any other man in life; had you counted His pulse it would have been normal. Who knows but the world has missed the normal pulse by not having taken that of Christ? When Daniel had his marvelous vision "He saw, and behold, one like the

Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." When the heavens opened and a voice was heard out of it saying, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased," and when the Spirit descended upon Him in the shape of a dove, it was a man that stood in the waters saying to John, "Suffer it to be so now, for so it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness"—a man born of woman.

Joseph Parker has sagely said, "His mother was no imaginary Mary. This literal history was required in order to vindicate her memory from the charge of her being a merely dramatic woman. She lived the common human life, wept the common tears, enjoyed the same enjoyments that fall to the lot of all. There is enough said about her in the Gospels to prove the poor human nature of the woman, and little enough said about her not to magnify her into a feminine god." The people who attempt to make her anything more than a woman are thereby detracting from the perfect humanity of Christ. It was "the seed of woman" that was to "bruise the serpent's head," and Jesus of Nazareth was such.

So, then, begotten by the Holy Ghost and born of

man, He was *God and man.* Who can explain this? "Great is the mystery of godliness." You receive more things upon statement than you ever believe by reason of demonstration. All history attests that, somehow, Jesus of Nazareth had the form and flesh and blood of man but the brain and heart and character of God. There is little occasion for either "if" in the lines—

"If Jesus Christ is a man,
And only a man, I say,
Of all mankind I will cleave to Him,
And to Him I will cleave alway.

"If Jesus Christ is a God,
And the very God, I swear,
I will follow Him through heaven or hell,
The earth, the sea, or the air."

But there is a third line of argument, namely—

III. THE TEST OF ACHIEVEMENTS.

His character is the incomparable One. No other man ever walked the earth who could face even his enemies and say, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" No other man ever lived of whom his disciples could say, "He was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin." It is no more the precepts of Jesus that win men to Him than it is the practice. The incomparable character of Jesus Christ is as powerful as His Gospel. "Whose preaching was it that led to

your conversion?" was asked of one who had just come into salvation. The answer was significant, "It was nobody's preaching, it was my mother's practicing."

What would happen in this world if all those who have named the name of Jesus Christ began to keep themselves unspotted from the world I shall not attempt to say, but I do dare to affirm that the spotless life of Jesus Christ is the one secret power of drawing men and women unto Himself. It is in vain that the sinner confesses to a sinful fellow-mortal and hears from his lips the words promising absolution. But to approach One who Himself never sinned, and to ask Him to become your advocate before God, is to name an intercessor who shall secure Divine favour. No wonder Isaac Watts could sing:

"With joy we meditate the grace
Of our High Priest above:
His heart is full of tenderness;
His bosom glows with love.

"Touched with a sympathy within,
He knows our feeble frame;
He knows what sore temptations mean,
For He has felt the same.

"He, in the days of feeble flesh,
Poured out His cries and tears,
And in His measure feels afresh
What every member bears.

"Then let our humble faith address
His mercy and His power;
We shall obtain delivering grace
In each distressing hour."

His achievements demand explanation. The marvel about Jesus Christ is not that He claimed so much but that He accomplished more. The Old Testament writers spake of "One to come who should open the eyes of the blind, heal the sick, and raise the dead." Wherever Jesus walked the most faithful reports indicate that the blind received their sight, lepers were cleansed, and never once before an open grave, or bier, did His word of command "Come forth" fail. Explain it, will you? Tell me, how did it happen that this man, living among a people of ignorance, was Himself enlightened; dwelling with the intolerant, was yet free from every arrogance; consorting with the harsh, was yet full of tenderness; in daily touch with the impotent, was yet possessed of all power?

Montgomery spoke truly when he said,

"When, like a stranger on our sphere,
The lowly Jesus wandered here,
Where'er He went, affliction fled,
And sickness reared her fainting head.

"The eye that rolled in irksome night,
Beheld His face—for God is light;
The opening ear, the loosened tongue,
His precepts heard, His praises sung.

> "With bounding steps the halt and lame,
> To hail their great Deliverer came;
> O'er the cold grave He bowed His head,
> He spake the word, and raised the dead."

Explain it. Let some man stand up and tell us why no other mortal ever wrought such deeds. Truly, as Renan confesses, "It would take a Jesus to forge a Jesus." If He was not a forger how do you account for Him? What better can you do than Matthew has done, say—"He was begotten by the Holy Ghost"?

But His indisputable credential is His saving power. It was a marvel when fever was rebuked by His word, it was a marvel when the Gadarene was dispossessed of devils! But His matchless sentence was "Thy sins are forgiven thee." His matchless power was the impartation of peace and purity to the soul of man!

Have you ever thought upon this phrase, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus"? Joseph Parker says, "Christ is the only man known in history who was born with special reference to the sins of the human family. He does not come into the race with small programs. The world is sick of men with programs an inch long." There are plenty of men all about us with small programs and abbreviated plans. There is the man who can shine your shoes; there is another who can shave your face; there is another who can clothe your form; there is another

who can construct your house; there is another who can stir your ambition. But where is the man who can save me from my sins? Who can take all the disordered machinery of life and put me to rights and set me to running for God and with God? In old Nazareth He was; in heaven He is; in earth He shall be! Aye, by His Spirit, here now, today, with the sole desire and purpose of salvation!

I have read, somewhere, the story of that man who, on a Sabbath day at an English seaport town, saw a vessel tossed by the rising storm, and heard the cry, "A man overboard." Looking out he saw brave rowers speeding toward him, and yet the man sank, and as he went down the on-looker saw one running down the beach, his face white with excitement, his eyes filled with anguish, and pointing to where the waves had just covered the head of the sinking man, he cried, "Save him! Save him! A thousand pounds to the man who saves him! He is my brother!" But the appeal was in vain, the remorseless waves were doing their work, the rowers had fallen short, for he was sinking but a few boat-lengths away!

But, beloved, when Peter on Gennesaret, found the waves parting beneath his feet and saw himself suddenly engulfed, his cry was directed to Jesus of Nazareth, "Lord save, or I perish!" and instantly His hand shot out and laid hold upon the doomed apostle and lifted him up. He is able to save! Will you put your trust in Him? I meet people

every day who tell me they have long intended to do this. A purpose put into no practice is worthless. "Behold, now is the time accepted; behold, today is the day of salvation." Jesus stands ready to respond, and is able to save.

III

THE CHILDHOOD OF CHRIST

"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him."—LUKE 2:40.

THE childhood of Jesus is a subject of easy speculation. Apocryphal gospels there are which narrate the most marvelous and unimaginable things as the experience and acts of the wonderful Nazarene lad. But the true Gospel passes full thirty years in a silence broken but a single time, and that time is clearly recorded in Luke 2:40-52. A solitary glimpse of Jesus, but a significant one.

The remarks made concerning His growth are significant. His attendance upon the feast of the tabernacles was significant. His place in the temple was significant. His questions and answers before the Sanhedrin were significant. His ready yielding to His parents and His implicit obedience were significant.

While it may seem most unnatural to pass through this great and potential period of youth with only this solitary reference to it all, it is most natural and even most wise to give us the glimpse

of Him at twelve years of age when He was passing from boyhood to manhood, at the moment when those emotions that make up life were beginning to stir every part of His being, perhaps the time when the very plans of life itself were being unfolded to Him by His heavenly Father. Then He let us look at His face just once. What a lad!

Frederick W. Farrar, in his "Life of Christ," tells us that when the moon is in crescent a few bright spots are visible through the telescope upon its unilluminated part; those bright spots are mountain peaks, so lofty that they catch the sunlight. And then he remarks, "One such point of splendour and majesty is revealed to us in the otherwise unknown region of Christ's youthful years, and it is sufficient to furnish us with a real insight into that entire portion of His life."

Consenting with Dean Farrar, I call your attention to some suggestions of the Scripture Luke 2:40-52.

I. THE NATURAL GROWTH.

The remark "The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him" undoubtedly looks to a natural three-fold division of life—physical, mental and spiritual. He was approaching a manhood which should come to the full, He was not to be a one-sided man, all physique and hence beastly; all intel-

lect and hence a book-worm, or all devotion and hence a bald monk.

The Young Men's Christian Associations have insisted that there is a four-fold development of life, physical, social, intellectual and spiritual. I think we will find even this in the text, for before we shall have finished we will see that Jesus increased not alone in wisdom and "in favour with God," but also "in favour with man."

His growth in stature reveals His true humanity. Paul, in writing to the Hebrews, makes a very significant remark. Quoting from Isaiah—"Here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me," the Apostle adds, "For as much, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same."

The humanity of Jesus is absolutely essential to His priesthood for, as the same apostle writes to the same people, "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4: 15).

I have no question myself but that His humanity was not only real but robust, and that this text is our Scriptural warrant for such a statement. He "grew" in stature! Dr. Campbell Morgan, pleading for the physical prowess of Jesus, says, "When will some inspired artist give us a true picture of

this glorious Man? He is almost always depicted as frail in physical form and lacking in bodily beauty. Perhaps the German artist Hoffmann has come nearest to the true ideal. 'There is no beauty that we should desire him,' but the prophet did not mean that He would be devoid of beauty, rather that men should not recognise it. We strenuously hold that He was perfect in physical form and proportion. The body is the outward and visible sign of the inward and invisible spirit, and the perfect spirit of Jesus would form a perfect physical tabernacle in which He passed the probationary life."

Visitors to the First Baptist Church, Minneapolis, who walk into one of the social rooms will see on the wall Mrs. Wayland Hoyt's painting of the Christ. It is Dr. Morgan's conception, a man of enormous proportions; the fullness of whose strength is suggested by every full-rounded muscle, yet the refinement of whose nature is distinctly painted into every feature of the great face. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of the Holy Ghost?" And is it not of the religion of Christ that the physical growth of the child should have the utmost care, and that a sound body should be reckoned as the best seat of a sound mind and a healthy soul?

But, as we have already suggested:

There was a social side to Christ's life. The lad of twelve was growing in another direction "in favour with men." I am glad that this phrase

appears in Luke's report. It tends to present the two sides of Jesus character, two sides which some people believe cannot exist in the one and same man—sweetness and strength, kindness and courage, personal attractiveness and professional repulsion. It is not difficult to imagine that the little children of Nazareth ran in and out of His shop for the pure pleasure of His smiles, that the young men and maidens often dropped into the same to hear His hearty greetings, to uncover to Him some secret of life or love which they would not share with another, and get His kindly counsel, and that even old men and women who watched His growth from infancy to manhood often remarked on Him in the language of ardent admiration.

It was only when He left the private life and went into the public; it was only when He could no longer exercise His personal graces, but delivered His professional and divinely appointed soul, it was only when to save the world He loved so much from death and hell, He had to speak of sin and show what it was, and what it would do in the lives of men, that both Gentile and Jew commenced to hate Him, commenced to overlook all His natural kindliness, to disregard His tender love, to misinterpret His warning speech, and finally to plead for His crucifixion.

But if any man, reading the story of this antagonism, concludes that Christ must have been a very unattractive, repellent individual, let him turn back

to this text and be corrected. He was a delightful companion. In private life men and women only knew Him to love Him. As He increased in age the circle of His friends widened, and when He closed the carpenter's shop for Jordan and the baptism of John, doubtless the most popular man that had ever lived in Nazareth left the village of His boyhood to begin the most unpopular career upon which a courageous soul was ever sent.

In the enlargement of Christ's life the intellect was prominent. "He grew in wisdom." Evidently that growth was not a normal one; evidently it was not such as the majority of the Jewish lads had revealed. Before His day other lads had shown strength, had either said or done remarkable things at this very age of puberty. The old Jewish legends tell that Moses had left the house of Pharaoh at that time, that such was Samuel when he heard the voice summoning him to the prophet's office, that Solomon was also twelve years of age when he had given a judgment that made for wisdom, and Joseph, at about the same age, had his first dream of what he was destined to accomplish. "The child" is, truly, "father to the man." Almost every lad at twelve is the prophecy of his own later life. The day does not break into full noon, there are the dawnings and the rising of the sun, but the man who studies the first can easily prophecy what is coming. A lightning flash is different, it breaks out unexpectedly; it illuminates

with a glory beyond the sun; its brilliance is such as to compel the attention of all men. We are told that the second coming of Christ shall be like the lightning. The first appearance was the dawning of a new day.

Men have debated and will, when Christ became conscious of His deity. It is not a subject for dogmatism. It does seem, however, that at twelve years of age He either perfectly understood, or else had begun to understand. Happy the boy who thus early in life becomes conscious that God is in him, and gladly consents to the indwelling Spirit, and feels as Jesus felt the power of the same, so that He can say, "*I must* do the will of the Father." If there is one thing in which I believe as the result of personal, mental, and emotional experience, any one thing which is an absolute necessity of all children of God, it is in the compelling voice, quickening the man, determining the will, pointing the way, namely, the voice of God.

Evidently also the devotion of spirit was keeping pace, for "The grace of God was upon him." This Scripture suggests something other than the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish people, something more than the fact that He knew He was the child of circumcision; something beyond His familiarity with the Jewish traditions; something beyond His conscious kinship with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; something beyond the formality of the phrase that is spoken to the effect that as "He had

been joined to the covenant so might it also be to him in regard to the law and to good works."

This phrase compasses a communion between the Son and Father, between the child Jesus and the infinite God. No wonder Ernest Renan says of Jesus "He has no visions; God does not speak to Him as to one outside himself; God is in Him; He feels He is close to God; He draws from His own heart all that He saw of the Father; He lives in the bosom of God by contact at every moment; hears Him without need of thunder or burning bush like Moses, or revealing tempest like Job, or oracle like the old Greek sages, or familiar genius like Socrates, or the angel Gabriel like Mahomet."

That grace of God which was upon Him was the personal consciousness of God in Him, and God with Him. This is the way to develop devotion of spirit. We may attend church as often as we like, we may pray all night if we please, we may even enter the closet and "shut to the door" and thereby literally fulfill the Saviour's injunction of secrecy, but unless somehow we get into the Divine presence and know the meaning of the phrase "with God" it is vain.

> "In the secret of His presence
> How my soul delights to hide.
> Oh, how precious are the moments
> Which I spend at Jesus' side,"

is a hymn which has always appealed to me as one

that must have been voiced by a soul *en rapport* with God, but

> "A little talk with Jesus
> Makes it right, all right,"

has always had a jingle of insincerity, not alone because of the jangle in tune, but largely because of the lightness with which the subject is treated. "A little talk with Jesus!"—That is the curse of the Church of God! Christ was in constant communion with the Father. Oh, that as Christians we might be in constant communication with Christ. It is the only way to have the grace of God in Christ.

II. THE SUPERNATURAL WISDOM.

The incident of Christ's remaining in Jerusalem when the parents departed for home results in their return.

What a scene! A twelve-year-old in the Temple, "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions," and the remark —"All that heard him were astonished at his answers."

The Temple was His preferred school. The posture was the posture of a student—"sitting." How different from the modern idea. Many of the twelve-year-old lads and lasses are now being made familiar with temples of vice; the picture show, the dance hall, the theatre,—these are modern institu-

tions, and men tell us that they have their "educational features." Truly! But they are out of all harmony with Christ's education. For His education He went to the Temple of God. The public school is all right in its place; secular information is not a sin; to know science is to know how God does His work in the natural world. But when men separate the School and the Temple, secularise the latter and flout the former, they are destroying the foundations of society.

Has it not occurred to you that the great men of the past have grown in the Temple of God? Not only its great prophets, but its great discoverers, its great inventors, its great scientists. Columbus was a church man, Livingstone learned much in the House of God. Men of letters have learned much there. Shakespeare was able to quote copiously from the Scriptures, and the temple in which he used to worship is still standing in Stratford-on-Avon. Carlyle was a child of the Church; let no modern scientist imagine that his predecessors were atheists, or even infidels. Call the roll:—Galileo, Kepler, Faraday, Henry, all trouped forth from the Temple of God. If you want reformers you will bring them from the same secret presence. Luther and Huss, Knox and Savonarola received not alone their inspiration, but much of their education there. The day when the Temple of God no longer plays a part in the education of the youth will be the same as the day in which this child Christ will no longer

be regarded as an ensample to children, and that day will sound the death knell of the education that is worth while.

Mark again: *Doctors of Divinity were His chosen teachers.* For He sat "in the midst of the doctors; both hearing them and asking them questions." These were not catch questions! These were not questions propounded to reveal His superior wisdom. These were questions of the earnest student who gave audience to His elders, and then to bring further information He plied them with questions.

There are people in the world, now, who imagine that the poorest place we can go for information is to the feet of the "Parson," as they call him. It might be well for such to remember what part the Doctors of Divinity have played in the whole educational scheme. It might be well to remember that these are the men who laid the foundations of Oxford, of Harvard, of Yale, of Brown and of Princeton, and that more of these men have been presidents and hold professorships than come from any other walk of life. It was truly a dark day for Harvard when she had as President a man who ruled the Bible out of his five feet of essential books. Boys graduating from the feet of such scholars, even though they be named "Doctors of Divinity," are destined to greatness only on the condition of parting company with their professors.

It is not difficult to see why Samuel became a

noted man in Israel. In the Temple and at the feet of Eli he learned. It is not hard to imagine how Spurgeon became England's most prominent preacher; on the knees of Dr. Knill, and from many other great students and teachers in the Church of God he took his great lessons, and in truth, never did he feel the need of another or better college than that which provided for the coming of these men to his father's house.

Is it not a strange sight, the modern school, supported in no considerable part by the money of men and women who love God and believe His Word, conducted now without a reference to His Holy Name? Almost anything permitted to enter its halls except His holy Word, and almost any subject under heaven, high or low, exalting or debasing, presented to the student-body save Christianity. Rum stains the escutcheon of the nation. Rome has almost removed her foundation stone.

And yet further, remember, *His understanding was an amazement.* "They that heard him were astonished at his answers." There had been bright lads before this lad appeared in Jerusalem, but there had been no lad like Him. There had been precocious youths, a multitude, previous to Jesus; no one of them had produced the impression upon the Sanhedrin that He was making, without ostentation, perhaps without even consciousness on His own part that He had accomplished it. He compelled the admiration of this circle of wise men and

left them in a dumb amazement at the wisdom of which the remark of later days would have been true even then, "We never heard it on this wise."

Yes, there is so much in the life of Christ that is inexplicable that those who deny His deity are dumb in His presence. There is but one explanation! Truly, in the language of Carnegie Simpson, "He is beyond our analyses. He confounds our canons of human nature. He compels our criticism to over-leap itself. He awes our spirits." There is a saying of Charles Lamb which is responded to by a very deep feeling within the heart of every true student of Christ, "If Shakespeare was to come into this room we should all rise up to meet him, but if Christ came we should all fall down and try to kiss the hem of His garment."

III. THE UNNATURAL SUBJECTION.

The reproof from His mother was gently given (vs. 48-52). "Son"—it is introduced with a word of affection—"why hast thou thus dealt with us?" It is a question sincerely put with the expectation of an answer. "Thy father and I have sought thee, sorrowing." It is a revelation of her love. Oh, wise mother! A lad had behaved badly in the presence of company. The mother looked at Him, but said not a word. Later she called Him aside and in a secret conference, with no one looking on to see the blush mantling the little cheeks, she told Him how it hurt, and how badly it looked.

A friend of John Adams told him he had found out who made him, by the reading of his mother's published letters. Many a man has been compelled to confess that the gentle, wise mother was God's wonderful agency for the formation of his life. We have the testimony of many of earth's greatest in this matter. Suppose we listen to them while two of its most eloquent talk to us about it.

John Ruskin says, " My mother steeped my soul in the knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures. I have just opened my oldest Bible. My mother's list of chapters with which she established me in life has just fallen out of it, and truly this maternal installation of my mind with those chapters I count the most precious, and on the whole, the most essential part of my education."

Let Tennyson sing of his sainted mother. In " The Princess " he tells the story of his admiration for the woman who bore him and at the same time reveals her character.

" Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her, one
Not learned, save in gracious household ways,
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
No Angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In Angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
Interpreter between the gods and men,
Who look'd all native to her place, and yet
On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,
And girdled her with music. Happy he

With such a mother! faith in womankind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall
He shall not blind his soul with clay."

I am glad that Christ was a mother's child, and that Mary lives, a mother's ensample.

Mark His reply—It was firm but gracious. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" I love that word "must." I believe in men who do things because they are compelled to do them, who do them because they cannot do otherwise; men who choose a certain path because they have heard Christ say, "This is the way, walk ye in it"; who face certain tasks because the Father demands it; who walk even to Calvary if that be His will; who fail not, even in Gethsemane, but conclude their agony with the cry, "Not my will, but thine, be done."

There is in that word the sound of a holy necessity. The man who can choose one path as well as another, the man who can please one party as well as another, the man who tries to please all parties, is a poor excuse of manhood and as far removed from the Man of Nazareth as the poles of the earth are apart.

Thank God for the statement "I must." There are some things we may do, but oh, there are other things we *must* do or lose out with God, and those are the things that involve "the Father's business." That is my business!

Finally, *His subserviency was surprising.* "And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." What a strange subjection, the subjection of the superior to the inferior! And yet that unnatural subjection was a further revelation of the unusual character. The lad of the truly great heart, the girl whose brain is blessedly developed, these may know more than their parents but they never parade it, they refuse even to think it, they give it no place in their feelings; to voice it is the last thing they would do. It is only a little man that wants to be forever giving orders. It is only a cramped and contracted life that is forever demanding allegiance and obedience. The man who lives in the large, as Christ lived, the man who looks upon all things and sees clearly, the man who is worthy to command, he is the man who stands ready to obey. For such the law of the Lord is not a hardship. David could say, "I will walk at liberty for I seek thy precepts."

Within the limits of His mother's will and his father's desire Christ found sufficient liberty, and yet He found delight, for, as Farrar remarks, "His self-subjection to them was all the more glorious in proportion to the greatness of the self-subjected." When will men learn that "To obey is better than sacrifice"?

IV

CHRIST, THE TEACHER

"Rabbi, we know that thou are a teacher come from God."—JOHN 3:2.

CHRIST, the Teacher, is an appropriate subject for students of the New Testament, for we must remember that teaching was one of the prominent traits of His earth-life as well as one of the most important functions of His matchless ministry. Many of those who came to Him addressed Him as "Teacher," and in so doing they spake better than they knew, for indeed He was, as Nicodemus said, "a teacher come from God."

Before Him Cicero had been in Rome, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle had stimulated Greek students by their instruction, and contemporaneous with Him, Gamaliel taught among the Jews; and yet, if all the ages past and all the ages to come could have been brought together in Jesus' time, He would still be worthy of the title "The Teacher," because of a truth "never man spake like this man."

It is my purpose to call your attention to some respects in which Christ effectively illustrated our text.

I. HIS UTTERANCE WAS WITH AUTHORITY.

If we turn to Mark's Gospel, first chapter, twenty-second verse, we find Jesus in a synagogue of Capernaum on the Sabbath day, teaching, and it is said of what He taught, "They were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes." If we look into Matthew's Gospel, seventh chapter, twenty-eighth verse, we are at the end of the longest discourse Christ ever delivered, at least so far as the inspired reports of His sermons inform us. This sermon was delivered on the mountain-side and begins with the fifth chapter of Matthew and ends at the close of the seventh with the words "And it came to pass that when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

What else would we expect from the Son of God than that He should so speak? He with whom wisdom is, needs not to be trained in poor schools and taught the traditions of the fathers and made familiar with the speeches of the so-called great in order that He may speak. Henry van Dyke, in "The Gospel for an Age of Doubt," says, "He did not make a long catena of quotations from learned sources." "He was not a commentator on truths already revealed. He was a Revealer of new truth. His teaching was not the exposition; it was the text. . . . He gave out His doctrine from the depths of His own consciousness as a flower

breathes perfume—fresh, pure, original and convincing." "His teaching is neither ancient nor modern, neither deductive, nor inductive, neither Jewish nor Greek, it is universal, enduring, valid for all minds and for all times. . . . It fits the spiritual needs of the nineteenth as closely as it fit the needs of the first century." "By His word we test all doctrines, conclusions and commands. On His word we build all faith. This is the source of authority in the Kingdom of Heaven." And Van Dyke only voices what the so-called Christian world accepts to the extent of its true Christianity, for the moment a man calls into question the authority of Jesus Christ, his Christianity is not in question but is under condemnation.

There are those who vainly imagine that they can deny the authority of Jesus Christ and yet keep a Bible that is worth one's study, and is a guide to life, holiness and heaven. But, as Dr. Talmage said, "Christ is the Alpha and Omega of this Word, and to deny Him and the authority of His every utterance, is to destroy the Word itself, for if we begin with Genesis, "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head" is Christ, the Alpha, and when we come to Revelation, the Lamb before the Throne who has conquered the Dragon of the Pit, is "Christ—the Omega." Take Christ out of the Bible and you have the Louvre without the pictures, the Tower of London without the jewels; take Him out and man is a failure, the

world a carcass and eternity a vast horror." But, thanks be to God, you cannot take Him out, for "Never man spake as this man." "He taught them as one having authority."

II. HIS SENTENCES WERE SIMPLE AND STRAIGHTFORWARD.

The Sermon on the Mount abundantly illustrates this claim, "And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven. Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

Take the sixth chapter: His sentences are equally simple and straightforward. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them, otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth, that thine alms may be in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly."

And in the seventh chapter: "Judge not that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge,

ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye, and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

Dr. Broadus, in his volume entitled " Preparation and Delivery of Sermons, says, " Style is excellent when, like the atmosphere, it shows the thought but itself is not seen, or, perhaps like stereoscopic glasses which, transparent themselves, give frame and body, and distinct outline to that which they exhibit." And surely that claim can be made for the style of Jesus Christ. It was not His habit to employ terms so technical and high-sounding as to obscure the thought and thereby get for Himself a cheap reputation for learning or eloquence, or both.

As I listen to men speak, whether as teachers, preachers or lecturers, there is nothing that quite so tries me as the obscurity of their sentences. A man may be as scholastic as he pleases in his own study, but when he stands before his audience he ought to be so simple and straightforward in statement that the little ones and the unlearned can understand him. At that point Christ Jesus is a Teacher of teachers.

Dr. John Hall, as he spoke to students for the

ministry, said, "Young men, it is a good thing to know Greek, but if you are to preach in America, it is absolutely necessary for you to speak in plain English." The beauty of that statement is that Dr. John Hall himself was a good illustration of it.

A distinguished theologian in conversation with Dr. Theodore Cuyler said, "If I should return to the pastoral charge of a church I should do two things: I would make more direct personal efforts for the conversion of souls and I would spend no time on the rhetoric of my sermons. I would saturate my mind with Bible truth and then deliver that truth in the simplest idiomatic English I could command."

I speak to not a few who teach, some in public school and college, a number of you in Sunday Schools; and in a certain sense all those of us who have come to years of maturity are instructors. Shall we not speak in plain words? I listened recently to two addresses delivered by a teacher who is reputed to be great, to audiences that were certainly not above the average. It is not an overstatement to say that every fifth word in his discourse would require a dictionary upon the part of a college graduate.

God's Son is no such teacher. Every sentence, from Matthew 3:15, where Jesus began His public ministry, to Matthew 28:20, where He uttered the Great Commission, is as clear as the noonday, and illustrates the claim of Christ, "I am

the light of the world." In His teaching is no darkness at all. With elaborate sentences He had nothing to do; technical terms found little employment at His tongue, well-poised sentences, perfectly rounded periods, and high-sounding climaxes may come from the lips of little men, but the great Son of God speaks and the ignorant of earth, and the little children understand. "Never man spake like this man."

III. HIS SUBJECTS WERE THE GREAT ESSENTIALS.

He spake of the Kingdom of God and of Heaven. He taught concerning the Son of Man, concerning the Father, concerning the Holy Ghost. He taught concerning sin, concerning repentance, concerning regeneration, concerning righteousness, concerning salvation. He taught concerning the church, concerning the immediate and final effects of His Gospel, concerning His second coming, the Millennium, the judgment, the future. No small theme ever engaged His tongue.

Put down a list of the subjects that could stand as proper titles to His talks to the disciples, and His sermons to the multitude, and write beside them the subjects that the average preacher puts into the paper in the course of the year; it would be to shame the latter.

At the present time some good men are engaged in collating the teachings of Jesus as they can be easily gathered out of the four Gospels, and in sys-

tematising them to show what subjects He discussed and what He said about them. They are bringing together abbreviated reports of Jesus' words and the result is a new vision of the Son of Man.

Dr. Horton tells us that in the ruined Abbey of St. Albans the restorers found a large amount of carved and painted stone trodden into the ground behind the chancel. When these were collected and patiently fitted together the shrine of the saint was recovered and now stands in its completeness, a visible proof that the fragments had originally belonged to the whole. "In the same way we are able to take the scattered utterances and thoughts of Jesus and fit them together until a lovely and harmonious structure of doctrine rises before our eyes." He might have added that when that structure is finished, when the last piece is laid in its place from foundation stone to finial, there is not one unimportant subject introduced, not one cheap sentence employed. "Never man spake like this man."

IV. THE OBJECT OF HIS TEACHING WAS EQUALLY SUPREME.

That object was two-fold.

First, *He taught to make successors unto Himself*. From the first day of His public ministry He seems never to have forgotten that He was shortly to cease speaking and go His way to

Golgotha, and yet His teaching was of such importance to the wicked world that He would fain have it continued, and must therefore, find some one or more who would stand in His stead after Calvary had cut short His life. That was doubtless the occasion of choosing the twelve. They were to be His successors in the office of teaching. They were successors in the truest sense. Not that any one of them, not even that the twelve combined, could ever teach as He taught, so far as natural powers were concerned, but upon the faithful eleven He was to send the Holy Spirit to "bring to their remembrance" the things He Himself had said, and to "guide them into all truth."

In John's Gospel, fourteenth chapter, twelfth verse, He is talking to His disciples about succeeding Him in office. He has told them again of His speedy departure and they are sad. He has comforted them by saying "Let not your hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me." Then, to show that everything was not to cease when He passed from the earth, He said, "Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father." And again, "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you."

James Stalker, in his volume entitled "Imago Christi," says, "If we were to express the aim of Christ in the training of the twelve by saying that it was to provide successors to Himself, we should be using too strong a word, for in His greatest and most characteristic work, the working out of redemption by His sufferings and death, He had and could have no successor. He finished the work, leaving nothing for anyone else to do. But this being understood, we may perhaps best understand what He did as a Teacher by saying that He was training His own successors."

It would seem indeed that no man who ever filled an office in love could be content to leave it unless he hoped a suitable successor could be found. In proportion as one partakes of the Christ-spirit this thought stands forth, for Christianity is a religion which looks to the future, and in the future must find its victory and reward. The question of a suitable successor arises every time a call from another field brings up the question of quitting the one of present occupancy, and every time a pain starts in him the thought "Who knows but I may be near my end."

A few years ago a teacher in a small college in Indiana, having had offered him a place of larger honour and richer financial returns, said, "I would accept this office instantly, only, if I did, I don't just know who would come to succeed me here." For a man to be so situated as to be able to train up

his successors, and through that training to come into such intimate touch with them as to know them in character as well as in conduct, in motive as well as in outward motion, and be convinced that truth would suffer nothing at their tongues, and find an equally vigourous putting by their pen would be a delight.

Dr. John A. Broadus mourned that he had no son to take up his work of teaching, but the cause of mourning was removed when a most scholarly man married his daughter, and at the Doctor's decision, stepped into his office to teach others the things the great man of God had taught him.

The second object of Christ's teaching was *the all-essential one, namely, Salvation.*

His mission to the world is well defined in the Old Testament. It was prophesied of Him, " The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." He was faithful unto His office!

In the Book of Matthew it is said, " And thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins," while Luke reports Him in these words, " The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." When Nicodemus came to Him at night and said, " Master, we know that thou art a teacher come from

God," Jesus responded to this appeal for instruction by saying, "Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

That was the all-essential object of His instruction. If one considers the subjects to which He turns His attention they were all essential to instruction about salvation. To Nicodemus He says, "Ye must be born again." Concerning the Father He said, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." Concerning the Spirit He said, "When he is come he will convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of the judgment; of sin because they believed not on me." Concerning repentance, He said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Concerning regeneration, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Concerning righteousness, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you." Concerning the Gospel He taught what Paul afterwards voiced in a single sentence, "It is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth." Concerning the Second Coming, He insisted upon preparation, since we "know not the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh." No sincere student of the teachings of Jesus could ever call into question that the purpose of it all,

so far as the supreme object was concerned, was salvation.

It seems a sad circumstance that so few of the teachers in our schools today, academies, colleges, universities and divinity seminaries are making salvation the supreme object of teaching. Would that more of them felt what a certain Principal expressed at a great Convention when he said, "Unless I can see accomplished student salvation I will not remain in the office of teacher."

What is the use of science if it does not show men to God? What is the use of literature if it does not lead to Him? What is the use of philosophy if through it you cannot find life? What is the use of charity unless you appreciate what Dr. Henderson said, "The soul of charity is charity for the soul." Oh, that the Spirit of Christ might possess more of our teachers as it possessed Prof. Tholuck, that great theological teacher, that successful enemy of German rationalism. In the midst of all his teaching, his work as an exegete, his book-writing and publishing, while walking rapidly to the position of a world-wide reputation, he gave four hours a day, we are told, to talking with students about their salvation, and when he was but a few years in his office as teacher he was able to say that he knew where there were more than a thousand young men that he had led to the Lord. Truly we may believe that he said, as reputed, "I have but one passion, and that is Christ."

V

CHRIST'S FIRST APOSTLES

"Now, as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him. And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him, and they went into Capernaum."—MARK 1 : 16-21.

THE lives of some great men make fascinating history. The life of Jesus Christ is superlatively so. For two thousand years men have been studying it, learning from it, marveling about it, and the marvel increases. Other men have had their followers, but no man ever had such disciples as those who became followers of Jesus. The first of these became especially famous, for in that list of four names, three of them became the inner circle of His intimates, Peter, James and John.

The manner of their call is elaborated by John, who, being one of them, would know the minor

details. The latter half of his first chapter is devoted to this story. Mark, however, makes a briefer and much more graphic account of it, and in some ways a more suggestive one. There is not, necessarily, the least inharmony between these two reports. Mark reports the call of the four, while John gives the manner of their response. It would seem, therefore, from John's Gospel, that it was not immediate in the instance of all, that two of the brothers, Andrew and John, more readily became inquirers, and that their influence was effectively brought to bear upon the other two, Peter and James.

Interpreting Mark's report in the light of John's record, we find especial attention called to The Christ of the Apostles, The Call of the Apostles, and The Commission of the Apostles.

I. THE CHRIST OF THE APOSTLES.

"Now, as he walked by the sea of Galilee." *He*—Jesus of Nazareth! He, whom John the Baptist saw coming unto him, and of whom he said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world."

In this remark of John's we have three fundamental facts regarding the person of Mark's report. He was Jesus of Nazareth, He was the Lamb of God, He was the world's only Saviour.

He was Jesus of Nazareth! Jesus is His human name! Though it suggests His divine mission, its

primary import is His pure humanity. He was born of a virgin; He was flesh and blood! When Pilate said, "Behold the man," his phrase was properly employed.

The famous paintings intended to represent Jesus strikingly signify a historical fact, namely, the debate of the centuries as between His humanity on the one side and His divinity on the other. The artists were doubtless influenced by the opinions of the fathers and early historians. Some of these describe Jesus as angelic in features, and God-like in the magnificence of His form. St. Jerome and St. Augustine, we are told, even reminded their auditors of the Psalmist's words, "Thou art fairer than the children of men," and Angelo, da Vinci, Raphael and Titian interpret the thought. On the other hand, great religious teachers, like Clement, Origen and Tertullian, took the prophet's words "When we shall see him there is no beauty in him that we should desire him" literally, and reminded their auditors of the prophecy that He should be "marred as was never man," and insisted that He was not only without celestial splendour, but lacked even in human attractions, was "ill-shapen and ignoble."

If one will study the theology of these fathers he will find, to his surprise, that the more sceptical ones of the early age held to this latter view, while those men who believed more implicitly in every word of God, held to the former—a most signifi-

cant fact! Those who believe only in the humanity of Jesus are liable to depreciate His personal attractions, "He is a man, and no God is to be found in that form." On the other hand, those who believe in His deity to such an extent as to doubt His real humanity are equally tempted to overemphasize the signs of divinity showing from every feature.

We do not know how much of veracity there is in the claim made for the ancient manuscript supposed to have been sent by Publicus Lentulus, President of Judæa, to the senate at Rome. It reads after this manner: "There lives at this time, in Judæa, a man of singular character whose name is Jesus Christ. The barbarians esteem him a prophet, but his followers adore him as the immediate offspring of the immortal God. He is endowed with such unparalleled virtue as to call back the dead from their graves, and to heal every kind of disease with a word or touch. His person is tall and elegantly shaped, his aspect is amiable, revered. His hair flows in those beautiful shades which no united colours can match, falling into graceful curls before his ears, and agreeably couching on his shoulders, and parting on the crown of his head like the head dress of the sect of the Nazarenes. His forehead is smooth and large, his cheek without spot, save that of a lovely red, his nose and mouth are formed with exquisite symmetry, his beard is thick and suited to the hair on his head,

reaching below his chin and parting in the middle like a fork; his eyes are bright, clear and serene.

"He rebukes with majesty, counsels with mildness, invites with tender and persuasive language, his whole address, whether in deed or word, being elegant, grave and characteristic of so exalted a being. No man has seen him laugh, but the whole world beholds him weep frequently, and so persuasive are his tears that the multitude cannot withhold their tears from joining in sympathy with him. He is very temperate, modest and wise. In short, whatever his phenomenon may turn out in the end, he seems a man of excellent beauty and perfections, every way surpassing the children of men."

Beyond question this is the conception of Jesus pretty generally held now, and we suspect, as near the true picture of His Personality as any one is likely to present.

But, according to the text, He was more than a man!

He was the very Lamb of God! The word of John the Baptist was, "Behold, the Lamb of God." In that language of the Baptist there was the linking up of Scriptures. The Old Testament prophets had pointed forward to One to come; the angel Gabriel had announced His arrival; by His baptism, God Himself unwilling longer to leave men in question, speaking of Him, said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

It would seem that any man who made an earnest

study of the life of Christ would be compelled to the expression of Napoleon: "Everything in Christ astonishes me. His spirit over-awes me; and His will confounds me. . . . His Gospel, His apparition, His empire, His march across the ages and the realms, everything is for me a prodigy, a mystery-insoluble." And yet, to stand in awe in the presence of Jesus is not enough; one who does that may be compelled to consent "He is the Son of God!" But such an one would not necessarily dwell upon John's particular thought, "The Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world"—the long-looked-for Messiah, the One hope of hurting hearts!

How are we to get that knowledge of Him? We believe that the way of the text, especially John's text, tells. The two disciples spent a day with Him. From His presence they went with a special testimony. It has always been so, and it will always remain so; the men who spend the most time with Jesus will most positively believe in His deity, and will be able to say without equivocation, "We have found the Messias," and will be able to answer the question of their doubting brothers as Philip replied to Nathanael, "Come and see."

Commenting upon that phrase, one said, "We are not at liberty to urge men to come and see our literature, we are not asking them to look upon the church as an institution, not to come and see the

preacher, not to come and look upon the most noted servant the Son of God ever had; we must go beyond the servant and show the inquirer the Lord Himself." And the man who sees Him in His risen glory and power, must of necessity fall at His feet, as did Thomas, and say, "My Lord and my God!"

If one answers that the visible presence of Christ is not in the world and so we cannot see Him, we reply, "If the visible presence of Christ is not in the world, the spiritual presence, which is a presence larger still, more positive, more glorious, is in the world," dispelling its despair, breaking its fetters, setting at liberty its slaves, lifting the curse of ignorance, the intolerable burdens of poverty, driving before its face its cruel inhumanity, and breathing upon every part of the world where His name has been made known the breath of sweetness, of kindness, of joy; and every doubting Nathanael of the world, if he but study that presence and person alike, would exclaim, "Rabbi, thou are the Son of God, thou are the King of Israel!"

Dr. Strong, former President of Rochester Theological Seminary, on his seventieth birthday, expressed his amazement that any man who had ever known Jesus as Saviour could by any process of the intellect whatever doubt His deity. And another equally eminent theological professor said, "If a reference to a personal experience may be pardoned, I may here set my seal. Never shall I

forget the gain to conscious faith and peace which came to my own soul not long after the first decisive and appropriating view of the crucified Lord as the sinner's sacrifice." So again we remark, the men who come into most intimate contact with Him will find it most easy to believe in His deity.

But, according to John, another remark regarding the Christ of the Apostles is justified.

He was the world's only Saviour. It is not many years since a liberal minister of London, in his book, "New Theology," exploited the theory that when Isaiah wrote the fifty-third chapter of his book he had no reference whatever to Jesus. One of the marked signs of the scepticism of this age is in the circumstance that now many men are mouthing this deliverance of infidelity, and some of them are men who once had reputations for loyalty to both Christ and His Book.

By the same process of argument one must deny that any Old Testament lamb slain upon the altar, under the Levitical system, had any reference whatever to "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." The testimony of John the Baptist, then, is disputed, and the interpretations of Philip, as he told the Ethiopian treasurer the meaning of Isaiah fifty-three, was far-fetched and false.

Dr. Campbell Morgan, by earnest, honest study, has made himself easily one of the most noted men of the world, and his contributions to literature

give positive proof of his versatility in Scripture, and Morgan, with much feeling, defends Isaiah's prophetic reference as being the plain finger of prophecy, and going further, he declares that Jesus, the Lamb of God, marked by the finger of John the Baptist, was typified as far back as Isaac's proposed offering, and the very question of Isaac to his father, "Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" is answered by John the Baptist, who, pointing to Jesus, said, "Behold the Lamb of God." He justly contends, "This is no mere accident. It is a part of the great proof of the unity of the Book. The old economy was able to produce the fire and the wood, symbol of judgment, but nothing more. In the New the perfect sacrifice is provided that sin may be put away; Jesus of Nazareth appears as God's Lamb 'slain from the foundation of the world.'"

Charles Spurgeon, speaking against the world's effort to provide another way of redemption, says, "Poor sinners, you are still looking to yourselves. You rake the dung-hills of your human nature to find the pearl of great price which is not there. You will look beneath the ice of your natural depravity to find the flame of comfort which is not there. You might as well seek in hell itself to find heaven as look into your own words and merits to find sure ground of trust. Down with your self-reliances! Down with them, every one of them! Away with all those confidences of yours, for

"None but Jesus, none but Jesus,
Can do helpless sinners good."

The one certain thing about Spurgeon is his scripturalness. Read Acts 4:12, "There is none other name, given under heaven and among men, whereby we must be saved."

II. THE CALL OF THE APOSTLES.

"Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me."

His call amounted to an actual demand. If Christ were only a man this would be one of the strangest speeches ever made, and would indicate madness. What right has an ordinary Nazarene to stop at the lakeside and look into the faces of successful fishermen and say to them, "Come ye after me," demanding that they leave their occupation, take up with Him, sit at His feet, learn of Him, take orders from Him, become not only His disciples, but His very servants? Where in human history has any other man, supposed to be in his right mind, addressed his followers after this manner, excepting he do it in the name of his office as king, or emperor, or caliph? And where did any man who had no such vested authority make such a demand upon his fellows, to have his demands regarded by a full and complete surrender of self?

No! What they had seen of Jesus had convinced them that He was more than a man. Already there is an impression at least, profound and

deep, to be later voiced by Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." In His voice they heard God's voice, and did not disregard it. When Joan of Arc undertook her matchless career, there was one impelling force driving her in unwonted ways, demanding of her the most unusual procedure, and in answer to every argument men made against her leadership she felt compelled to say, "My voices!" "My voices!" by which she meant, "God is speaking and I hear and must obey."

That great missionary leader, Robert E. Speer, speaking on "What Constitutes a Missionary Call," says, "Every time I go down to Asheville, and the train stops long enough in Salisbury, I go out to a little graveyard in the middle of the town and walk to a grave that I found several years ago. Something on a stone caught my eye and when I came up to it I read the inscription, 'Here lies the body of F. M. Kent, Lieutenant-Colonel of the First Louisiana Regulars, who died in 1864, in the month of April,' and underneath are these words, 'He gave his life for the cause he loved.' Near by was the grave of John R. Pearson, First Lieutenant of the Seventh Regiment of North Carolina, who was shot at Petersburg at the age of eighteen, and beneath the name the simple record, 'I look for the resurrection of the dead.'" Spear says, "I took off my hat and stood beside the graves of the eighteen-year-old lieutenant and the older colonel, who had

given their lives for the cause they loved. I said, 'Was that the way men did in those days? Did they answer the call of their leader e'en though they knew they were marching in the face of death, prompted in their response by love for a great cause?'" Shall men do less now? Shall the call of Jefferson Davis and the love of the Southland mean more than the call of Jesus, than the love of a sinning and dying world? God forbid!

This Scripture also expresses the idea of subservience. "Come ye after me." "After me" is suggestive. Christ must lead, the Christian must follow. He must forever remain the Master, we must forever be servants. We employ the word "servant" meaning not alone secondary station, but with a view of faithful service. Many writers have spoken of the evident fact that Jesus was a judge of men. He knew what was in them. Have you not been impressed by the historical circumstance that Jesus never called any man from idleness? In the first instance here the brothers were casting their nets, actually engaged in their daily vocation. In the next instance they were mending their nets, not only indicating their expectations of success in future fishing, but possibly suggesting a catch like that which they took once at Jesus' command, which broke the net.

When Levi was called he was sitting at the seat of custom, and so on for every one of the twelve. That professor of the theological seminary who

told his students about a man who came to him saying he was sure he had been called to the ministry, and when asked "Why?" replied, "Because I fail at everything else I try to do" was not reporting an exceptional instance. Again and again men talk after the same manner, saying that the Lord has shut all other doors before them and they think it is an evidence that He is opening to them the door of the ministry. It is the poorest recommendation that any man has ever brought. Servants of the Lord God, if they are to do anything for Him, must be busy men and successful ones. We are not sirprised that Christ should call men who were successfully engaged.

But the next sentence reminds us of another fact, namely, *His call looks always to personal and official exaltation.* "Fishing" is an honest calling, but "fishing for men" is a more honourable one. That statement is capable of a very wide application. We do not care for what you are fishing, whether it be fish or office or gold. We do not care how successful you are in taking fish, or in securing office, or in heaping up gold; if God calls you from that occupation to be a "fisher of men" He has favoured you with the highest of all honours, and brought you to an exaltation of which the world knows nothing.

We have a friend in the ministry, one of the most noted Congregational ministers in the world, who came up from a position of poverty and hum-

ble apprenticeship in England, to be pastor, author, lecturer, with international reputation in all. You say "God has exalted him and honoured him." We have a friend in the Methodist ministry whose name is a household word in America, who began life as a blacksmith. You say "God has exalted and honoured him." We have a friend in the Baptist ministry, looked upon now as knowing few equals and no superiors, who began life as a farm lad. You say "God has honoured him and exalted him." We have a friend in the Presbyterian ministry who used to be one of the leading baseball lights of the land. You say "God has exalted him and honoured him." We say to you that when God called another friend, a man from the office of teacher, to preach, God called him and exalted him; and yet another He called from the office of banker, and that man He also honoured and exalted, and yet another whom He called from a successful practice of law to preach the Gospel, and in the call he was honoured and exalted.

Those of us who are parents are very likely to think if our daughters could marry brilliant and rich men rather than go as missionaries, we should see them honoured instead of hidden. But such thought is folly and shows our poor appreciation of real values. We also think if our sons could engage in one of the noble professions and stand at the top in the same rather than serve God in some station of comparative humility, that we could share the

honours with them. But such judgment is pitiable in the light of Scripture teaching, and none the less so in the light of Christian experience.

It will be confessed that when General Booth died no king of England was more highly honoured in his death. J. Wilbur Chapman says that one day he said to General Booth, "Tell me, what has been the secret of your success?" Before that question the great General hesitated a moment and then, with tears in his eyes, tears which crept slowly down his furrowed cheeks, said, "Chapman, I will tell you the secret. God has had all there was of me. There have been men with greater brains than I, men with greater opportunities, but from the day I got the poor of London on my heart, and a vision of what Jesus Christ could do for them, I made up my mind that God could have all there was of William Booth." "Then," said Chapman, "I learned another secret, for immediately the great man kneeled and prayed, and as I listened to him pleading for the outcasts of London, and of New York, the lost of China, and for the great world itself, lying in the wicked one, pleading with sobs and tears, I understood that his success was measured by his surrender."

III. THE COMMISSION OF THE APOSTLES.

It was to be fishers of their fellows.

"Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men."

Notwithstanding our modern teaching with the emphasis upon sociology and all the rest, the Son of God set His disciples to one task, viz., to win their fellows, to be fishers of men. Dr. A. C. Dixon is a good example of his own words. On one occasion he said, "Our business is to save some. We may do other things, but they are incidental. As you walk down the corridor of the Astor House towards the restaurant you will see standing in the door a man who never looks into your face, he always looks at your shoes. That man's business is to black shoes, and I have never seen him look into the face of a guest. His one thought is about the condition of their shoes. A life insurance agent told me that he never saw a respectable man who did not suggest to him a policy. His business was to get policies. Every person you meet should suggest salvation." When John Wesley was robbed by a highwayman he said to the fellow, "Some time, my friend, you may repent of this, and if you ever do, remember, 'The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.'" Years afterward that man sought out Wesley and told him that the word spoken then had been as a barbed arrow in his heart, finally compelling repentance and surrender to the Son of God. The apostle of Christ has one supreme call! Take men!

For that call Christ has promised to prepare them. "I will make you to become fishers of

men." The essential preparation for every man who would do Christ's service must come from Christ Himself. Other teachers he may have, this greatest of teachers he must have. Men talk sometimes about "modern education" as if the world had just now begun to believe in scientific research, as if the church had just now begun to think that an educated ministry were desirable. Such conceptions are but the expression of the egoism of the age. There were cultured men in Greece, cultured men in Rome; Gamaliel was a great teacher two thousand years ago, and the apostle Paul a splendid and accomplished scholar. "Modern education" is, for the most part, a boast. Our forefathers believed in education, and in proportion to their opportunities, they secured it, notwithstanding the circumstances by which they were hampered.

If anybody doubts this he needs only to look into history a little to be convinced of it. Let our Puritan fathers express themselves upon this subject. Over the north gate of Harvard you will read the inscription, "After God had carried us safely to New England, and we had builded our houses, provided necessaries for our livelihood, reared convenient places for God's worship, and settled the civil government, one of the next things we longed for and looked after was to advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity, dreading to leave an illiterate ministry to our churches when our *present ministry*

(mark the phrase—an educated one) shall lie in the dust."

The Church of God, wherever it has lived in the spirit of its Master, has been at once the parent and patron of education, but if the day ever comes when she forgets that for the special apostles of Jesus at home and abroad the essential education must come from the great Master Himself, it will be a day darkening into night, a day threatening doom.

As the pastor of a congregation including hundreds of young people, I have almost a boundless pride in the number who are students, good students. But I should be a false leader if I did not remind them that no teacher at whose feet men sit is worthy to be mentioned in the same breath with the Teacher who said, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." No preparation of the schools can ever take the place of that preparation which comes from receiving His Spirit and imbibing His wisdom.

And yet one point more in this election of the first apostles.

The place of their work was His appointment. For when they forsook their nets and followed Him, He led them "into Capernaum." When they arose to go after Him they did not know where He would lead, nor does it seem that they asked. That was with Him! He makes no mistakes! It may be in India, it may be in Africa, it may be in China, it may be in America; let the Master say. It is

little wonder that He wants some to go to Africa when we are told that oftentimes the delegates that come from the villages and jungles walk hundreds of miles to beg for teachers. It is little wonder that He sent two of my college mates to Korea, Moffitt and Beard, for in thirty-five years there they have seen thousands and tens of thousands turn to the Lord God.

It is little wonder that He lays financial demands upon some of those of us He has called to live in this land of light and privilege. The marvel is that with our small sacrifices He accomplishes so much. Some years since we were told that each thousand dollars spent in a year paid the salary of one missionary, supported seven native workers, helped to win sixteen new converts, assisted four Sunday Schools, provided Bible instruction for one hundred and sixty-five Sunday school pupils, gave Christian education to sixty boys and girls, secured $745.00 in contributions from native Christians, gave Christian medical treatment to forty-five sufferers, cared for the administration work, and secured immeasurable spiritual results which no man can tabulate.

And so in our giving or going, let Him lead!

VI

THE MIRACLES OF CHRIST

"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him."—JOHN 2:11.

THE orthodox Christian world has fully consented to the authenticity of this miracle, and does not call into question the record of the many marvels of Christ's ministry which succeeded this one wrought in Cana of Galilee. But, strange to say, that same orthodoxy is "divided against itself" on the subject of the modern miracle. The creeds of most of the greater denominations are silent touching the issues of this controversy. Atheists, Naturalists, Rationalists, Formalists, and kindred folk have so violently and assiduously assaulted the miracle itself, and spoken with such rage against the thought of a modern miracle, that they have made timid men afraid to talk on this subject lest they should seem to fly in the face of Philosophy or Science, or both; and they have coerced from too many Christian men the humiliating concession concerning the Lazarus at the gate "thy bruise is incurable; thy wound is grievous, there

is none to plead thy cause, that thou may'st be bound up."

Is such a concession to the power of the Adversary necessary? What saith the Word? The true prophet's part was voiced to Samuel by the aged Eli—"What is the thing that the Lord hath said unto thee? I pray thee hide it not from me. God do so to thee and more also, if thou hide anything . . . of all the things that He hath said unto thee." If men are to be saved from the vagaries and fanaticisms which are more and more multiplying on every side, it must be through the faithful ministry of the Word. Every subject of controversy must be brought to it for settlement, and the honest inquirer will ask but one question, "What saith the Scripture?"

Now to the text, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him."

This text marvelously compasses what I want to say on Supernaturalism, or The Miracle Ancient and Modern. Following its plain suggestions I call your attention to The Miracle Performed: The Miracle Promised: and, The Purpose of the Miracle.

I. THE MIRACLE PERFORMED.

"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee."

The question asked by every student of this sub-

ject is, "*What is a miracle?*" It is a question not so easily answered. In fact the very difficulty of defining a miracle has been made the ground of its denial alike by sceptics and ecclesiastical scribes. And yet, as Dr. Lorimer has said, "The Gospels have taught that miracles are astonishing and expressive effects of which the Divine energy is the direct and all-sufficient cause." Whether that definition be accepted or no, the question of miracles is not to be evaded. What men want to know is this, whether what Jesus did at Cana of Galilee in turning water into wine; at Jericho, in opening the eyes of the blind; at the bier of the Nain widow's son, and again at Lazarus' tomb in raising the dead, are works so wonderful that God's power alone accounts for them? If so, it is all one with us whether you speak of them as "miracles," "signs," "wonders," or "power." The act is defined not so much by words as by the conceded presence and power of God.

Edward Gilpin Johnson, in his introduction to "Reynolds' Discourses," says of beauty: "Beauty analysed is beauty slain, and it is, after all, wiser to rest satisfied with inhaling the fragrance of the flower of art and enjoying its perfections, than to pull it to pieces, count the petals and stamens, and resolve the perfume into an essence scientifically procurable from wayside seeds." The ninth chapter of John presents a perfect illustration of our thought: a man blind from his birth had received

his sight at the word of the Lord. Being brought unto the Pharisees they asked him how he had received his sight? And yet again they said unto him, "What did He do thee? How opened He thine eyes?" thereby taking the advantage of disputants who would evade facts by entrenching themselves behind the difficulties of a definition. The answer of that man includes one of the best definitions of a miracle possible, "One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." And again, "If this man were not of God he could do nothing." A miracle is some astonishing expression of God's might.

"*This beginning of miracles did Jesus.*" Water was turned into wine by the fiat of His own will. For Him to mentally command it was sufficient, since "all things are possible with God." It is only the millionth man who rises to any proper conception of the Divine majesty and power. Whenever you meet such a man his faith makes his name immortal. Witness the Centurion who at Capernaum "came beseeching Christ, saying, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof, but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed. . . . When Jesus heard that, he marveled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

And yet, why should a man who believes in God exercise less confidence in His power? It is a

strange freak of the intellect, to say the least, to consent to Hebrews 11:3—"By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things which do appear" (R. V.), and in the next breath call into question whether He who spake the universe into existence can quicken the palsied, cleanse the leper, or raise the dead with a word. O. M. Mitchel, in his "Planetary and Solar World," says of the rings of Saturn, "It is beyond our power to conceive how this could be accomplished by any law of which we have any knowledge, and we must refer their structure at once to the fiat of Omnipotence. The rings of Saturn are stubborn facts, why should the Scientist who has no possible explanation of their existence and relations, object to Mitchel's believing disposition of them?

Robert Buchanan says justly, concerning the effort of men to reject the miracle and keep the Master, "We may follow Mr. Matthew Arnold in his pitiful feats of literary Jesuitry, and put all the miraculous business aside in order to throw one last straw of hope to the sinking Church of England. We may putter and quibble about "poetry" and "essential" religion just as much or as little as we please, but with the loss of the supernatural pretension, perishes the whole fabric of organised Christianity."

The opinion of Strauss, Baur, Newman and

others that a miracle "is unnatural and hence impossible" can carry but little weight with clear thinking men, and still less with Christian believers. The supernatural is in no sense the unnatural. It would be difficult to show that the miracles of the Master were not, every one, a replacement of some dethroned power to its natural position. It is possible for the electric current that drives the street car to be reversed and turn the wheel backward. Will the scientist who witnesses this operation claim an unnatural action when the operator so manipulates the current as to drive his car forward again? What else is sickness than a reversal of all the natural levers of physical life, a backward revolution of the machinery of nature? What else was Christ's healing than turning again the currents of health into their appointed channels?

In some sections of China women's feet are bound, and that custom prevails so extensively that many a girl grows up feeling it must be so. And yet is it unnatural when Christian teaching takes the bandages from the toes and the feet of a Chinese woman attain their divinely appointed proportions? What else is paralysis and blindness than a binding of the feet and a blinding of the eyes by the Adversary? And what else is the word of Jesus, "Arise, take up thy bed and walk," "Receive thy sight," than a tearing away of the same, that Nature may reassert herself? Who can prove

that death is natural? Why, then, should these devotees of so-called Law object and count it "a thing incredible that God should raise the dead?" The resurrection of the body from the grave may be as much in keeping with the eternal laws of God as is the coming of the beautiful chrysalis out of the silken bag in which last season's caterpillar perished. Christian men and women cannot afford to forget either that the miracle is possible, or else "the new heavens and the new earth" promised in the Revelation are a mirage—never to be realised, and believers are, as the Apostle Paul put it, "of all men most miserable" since their "faith is in vain."

II. THE MIRACLE PROMISED.

"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee."

The water made wine was only *the first in a series of wonderful works.* It was only the beginning of Christ's miracles. The very phrase employed is a promise of marvels to follow. To turn water into wine was wonderful, but greater things should they see who walk with the Son of God. Tomorrow He will heal the nobleman's son, the next day He will still the tempest, shortly the demoniac of Gadara shall be dispossessed, Jairus' daughter raised, the paralytic freshly empowered, the leper cleansed, the Centurion's servant healed, Simon's wife's mother recovered from her fever,

the widow's son raised from the dead, and many other wonderful works. How many miracles Jesus wrought no man knows. In addition to the thirty odd, detailed, there are those sweeping sentences, "And he healed all that were sick, and oppressed of the devil." Men, anxious to obscure the miracle, are wont to insist that Jesus gave Himself mostly to wonderful words. But any fair student of the Word of God must know that wonderful works claim at least half of this Divine record, and probably played no less conspicuous part in the life-labours of the Son of Man. True, the opponents of Jesus said, "Never man spake like this man," but the language of Nicodemus is equally suggestive, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest except God be with him."

The words and works of Jesus were alike only beginnings. The miracle at Cana of Galilee was only a beginning of what Jesus would do in His office as Mediator between God and man. Students of the Word have been profoundly impressed by the opening sentence of Acts, "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach." Certainly it never entered the mind of the Master that either His matchless words or His marvelous works would end at Calvary. For three years and a half He had made one of the chief objects of His ministry suc-

cessors in labour. When His disciples were sorrowing at the shadow of the cross He comforted them by saying, "Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me. . . . He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do because I go unto my Father." If any man say that the works to be done by His apostles and disciples did not include miracles, it is sufficient to answer, "How readest thou?" Hear His commission to the twelve, "As ye go preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils. Freely ye have received, freely give." And if any man say, "Yes, but this commission was given only to a select company," you answer, "If so, the same cannot be asserted concerning the promise of power," for, lo, these words conclude one of the Gospels, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved. All these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents, if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them. They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

Was James prescribing for apostles only, or for the period in which he lived, when he wrote, "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anoint-

ing him with oil in the name of the Lord, and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up"? Were Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Tertullian, Origen, and Clement false in their claims of miracles in answer to prayer? Were those godly men and women of the middle ages, who kept the fires of a true faith smouldering when an apostate church smothered inspiration itself, mistaken in supposing that these commissions were theirs, and their associated promises still potent? Was Bishop Simpson deceived when, in the fall of 1858, while at death's door, he mingled his voice with that of Bishop Bowman, William Taylor, and others, asking to be recovered, and there came a change so sudden that the physician called it "a miracle," in that he attributed it to the promise and power of God? Years ago, at Northfield, Mass., I met that marvelous woman, Mrs. Whittemore, whose fame is in all the churches, and she told me how she had gone on her knees practically a blind woman and had come up from them seeing clearly. Was she mistaken in attributing the change to the Christ of this text, of whose ministry it was said, "The blind receive their sight"? To come nearer home, who is it that having known the long years of suffering on the part of Miss Hollister, of Minneapolis, and the sudden health that came while praying, but is led to join with the rulers in saying, "That indeed a notable miracle hath been done is manifest, and we cannot deny

it"? God forbid that any should add, "but that it spread no further among the people, let us straightly threaten her that she speak no further in this name."

There are those who argue that if miracles were meant to characterise all ages they would not have been so common in the ministry of Jesus and so exceptional among His modern followers. Dr. Gordon tells us of certain South African rivers, which, instead of beginning as tiny brooks and flowing on deepening and widening as they go, burst out from prolific springs, and then become shallower and shallower as they go on, until they are lost in the wastes of sand. It cannot be forgotten that the stream of salvation which began with the ministry of our Lord was at its fullest in the first century, so far at least as conquest against greatest odds was concerned. Why, then, should we be surprised if the Son of God Himself, who had the Spirit without measure, should witness the miraculous more often than appears now on the fields made too nearly desert by the burning sun of secularism and the devastating winds of scepticism? And yet, the failure of present-day believers to appropriate the promises of God no more discredits the Divine purpose in making them than did the discomfiture of the disciples, praying in vain for the relief of the epileptic, prove that Christ had put into His commission to the twelve words which were mischievous and misleading.

III. THE MIRACLE'S PURPOSE.

"This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory. And his disciples believed on him."

It evidenced the deity of Jesus. You will remember that when He performed the miracle of the barley loaves and fishes the men who saw the miracle that Jesus did, said, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world" (John 6:14). It was a natural reasoning. Jesus Himself appealed to the Jews, "If I do not the works of my Father believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him" (John 10:37-38). To John the Baptist's question, "Art thou he that should come?" Jesus answered and said unto them, "Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see, the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them" (Matt. 11:4-5).

It expressed the sympathy of Jesus. It is the custom of all those who call the modern miracle into question to emphasise the fact that miracles attested the deity of Jesus and added authority or weight to His words, but the most of them are silent touching the fact that miracles were ever wrought for their own sake, that miracles were ever wrought because the sight of suffering or dis-

tress so appealed to the Son of God that He could no more withhold His beneficent power than He could restrain Himself from tender pity. The glory of Jesus Christ consisted not alone in exhibitions of His deity, but was equally manifested in the ebullitions of His humanity. At the grave of Lazarus He "wept." No man need be surprised, therefore, when He cried to His friend, fallen under the fierce assault of the last enemy, "Come forth!" He who will may believe that that miracle was meant only to attest the divinity of Jesus, or add weight to His spoken words, but I am compelled to think that it was the cry of His human heart calling back to His arms His bosom friend, and causing the hearts of those beautiful sisters, Mary and Martha, to lose their sorrow and leap for joy.

Victor Hugo makes Jean Valjean as watchful as the hunted ever are against possible detection on the part of his adversary, but when a driver's wagon is mired, this same man crawls beneath it, and by his Herculean strength releases its wheels, and in the very process publishes his own name. Did Jean Valjean lift that wagon to exhibit his power? Never! but because his tender human heart could not "pass by on the other side," seeing the distress of the stalled man. The Samaritan who ministered to the man on the way to Jericho, binding up his wounds, carrying him to an inn, paying his bills, providing against the future, did he do

that that Samaria might have a good name, or that anybody might believe in him? Nay, verily, but because in his breast there beat the heart of a brother. And if I know the Christ at all, He healed sick men, opened the eyes of the blind, and raised the dead primarily because His heart was as humane as His character was Divine, His spirit as compassionate as His word was potent. Is it not written, "And Jesus went forth and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick" (Matt. 14:14)? No wonder John wrote, "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace." And that glory was never better manifested than in the miracles that Jesus wrought for the help, health and happiness of men. It is while studying this side of His character we realise that our "High Priest" can be "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" and are encouraged to "come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

It attested the saving power of Jesus. To do that was to manifest forth His glory. "The Son of Man was come to seek and to save that which was lost," to grant "remission of sins." They called His name "Jesus" because He was to save His people from their sins. When He said to the paralytic, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," they

charged Him with blasphemy, saying, "Who can forgive sins but God?" "And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier to say Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house." The Father which sent Him, therein bore witness to Him, "confirming the word with signs following" and proving the power to forgive sins by the fact that He could restore bodies.

It is no wonder the sentence follows, "And his disciples believed on him." God meant that men should be convinced through the senses, that they should accept what they had seen and heard. When John comes to write his first Epistle he lays claim to attention on the part of his readers by reason of the fact that he was speaking of the things which he had seen with his eyes, and heard with his ears, and handled of the Word of life. And if the miracle was potent for penitence and furnished the very basis of belief two thousand years ago, who doubts that the revival of the Word's plain teaching concerning it, and the practice of claiming its promises, would compel men to cry out again as did Peter, "We are unclean," and to seek His favour who is alike able to say "Arise, take up thy bed and walk," or "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee." Have we forgotten the remark which the many who resorted to Him beyond Jordan made? "John did no miracle, but all things that John

spake of this man were true and they believed on him there" (John 10:41-42). Have we forgotten the result when He raised to life the widow's son and delivered him to his mother? "There came a fear on all and they glorified God, saying, A great prophet is risen up among us, and God hath visited his people."

It is true that every great revival of the past has come in consequence of the recovery of some long lost truth. "The just shall live by faith," bringing a revival in Luther's time; the eternal sovereignty of God, adding weight to Calvin's words; the personal responsibility for rejecting or accepting Jesus making effective the preaching of Wesley; the great commission giving power to Carey and his associates; the enduement of the Spirit—a second blessing, fitting for service—bringing great results in Finney's day; the premillennial return of the Lord making Moody a flaming figure.

Do we not recall how in the days of Josiah—the good king—the high priest when he searched through the house of the Lord found the book of the law given by Moses, and "Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the Scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the Lord. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan. And Shaphan carried the book to the king. . . . And it came to pass, when the king had heard the words of the law, that he rent his clothes," and confessed "great

is the wrath of the Lord that is poured out upon us, because our fathers have not kept the word of the Lord, to do after all that is written in this book. . . . Then the king sent and gathered together all the elders of Judah and Jerusalem. And the king went up into the house of the Lord and all the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and the priests, and the Levites and all the people, great and small, and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the Lord. And the king stood in his place and made a covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which was written in this book. And he caused all that were present in Jerusalem and Benjamin to stand to it. And the inhabitants of Jerusalem did according to the covenant of God, the God of their fathers. And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve, even to serve the Lord their God. And all his days they departed not from following the Lord, the God of their fathers" (2 Chron. 34:15, 16, 18, 29-33).

I am persuaded that the truth, which when recovered, shall empower an enfeebled church and cause "strawberry festivals to give place to the

festivals of the saints," and which will make men depend not so much upon the music in the gallery, or the eloquence in the pulpit, or the culture in the pew, as upon the power of God, and finance committees to look not to the latest fads in fair or festival, but to the Father who owns the cattle upon a thousand hills, and preachers to hope for successful meetings not from the coming of some famed brother, but rather from waiting in the upper room until they themselves have been baptised;—the truth, I say, that will accomplish this change, is in those plain texts which prove that God is present in His own world, and His arm is not shortened that He cannot save, nor His ear heavy that He cannot hear.

When men see the lesser miracles, once performed by the Son of God, being repeated in answer to prayer, they will be encouraged to look for that greatest of all His marvels, the salvation of sinners from sin. It is no mere accident that Charles Spurgeon, who prayed for many people to see them made well, prayed again, and preached to see men saved in soul. It is no mere accident that George Mueller, who believed that God was present in His world and was working wonders, turned evangelist in the very last years of his life, and revivals were in his wake wherever he went. It is no mere chance that John Wesley, who when disabled with pain, fever, and cough, called on Jesus to restore him, that he might continue to speak, and

found, as he himself said, "When I was praying my pain vanished away, my fever left me, my bodily strength returned," was able to effectually call sinners to repentance, and pray successfully for their pardon.

All over this country good preachers of the Gospel and noble souls in the pew are praying for a revival. In recent years plans for evangelism have been more extensive, expensive and emphatic than the church ever before knew; and right at the time when "the new century movement for evangelism" ought to be at its height, in the very season when the reapers should be gathering whereon we have sown, there come to us annual reports that strike the prophets of optimism into silence, and send the church flat on her face again to cry to God for help. But our cry will be like that of the prophets of Baal. Though it increase in agony, and we torture our souls as they cut their bodies, no fire will fall from heaven while we bow before the false gods of Naturalism, or worship at the superstitious shrines of Social Philosophy or Scientific Culture!

Only by acknowledging God, by believing that what men have pronounced "impossible" is easy to Him, by seeing that whoever may pour on the extinguishing waters, He is yet able, and yet willing, and forever pledged, setting aside your so-called natural law, by His own right and power, to let the flames fall, can we hope for that con-

flagration which shall revive God's people, overthrow the prophets that oppose them, and bring even the unbelieving in penitence before Him to acknowledge that "He is God."

VII

THE MINISTRY OF CHRIST

"And Jesus went about all Galilee . . . preaching the gospel of the Kingdom . . . and his fame went throughout all Syria . . . and there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan."—MATT. 4:23-25.

ONE afternoon, riding with two of my aged deacons, they talked to me about some of the orators it had been their privilege to hear, Wendell Phillips, Horace Greeley, Elihu Burritt, Henry Ward Beecher, and others. What a privilege to have heard such men! No wonder the memory of it was fresh. But to have heard Jesus Christ, to have listened to Him who "spake as never man spake," to have given attention to the oratory of the Nazarene,—who can understand that experience, who can imagine that privilege?

After two thousand years, yea, after six thousand years of human history, He is the incomparable orator, the peerless preacher, the only perfect prophet of God.

We invite your attention to Christ the Preacher. We want to speak on four phases of this subject.

I. THE SPIRIT OF JESUS THE PREACHER.

It was that of a commissioned man. It was that of one who never had, who never would, who never could question His divine call. After thirty years of silence He begins to speak, and in His very early ministry He gives His auditors to understand that He preaches because God appointed Him to that work, for in Luke 4: 16 f. we read, "And he came to Nazareth where he had been brought up, and as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias, and when he had opened the book, he found the place where it is written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor: he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and the recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord; and he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister and sat down, and the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened upon him, and he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears: and all bare him witness and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth."

The first essential to success in the Gospel ministry is a profound conviction that God has called one to preach.

His spirit was that of a conscientious man. He said on one occasion, "I *must* preach the kingdom of God, for therefore am I sent." You must have noted in the study of history that the world's most eloquent men have been the world's most conscientious men. Socrates' philosophical convictions accounted for his fervour and oratory.

Savonarola was heard by thousands because he so honestly believed what he said. Martin Luther moved all Europe when he became convinced of the truth. Wesley, Whitfield, Edwards were orators from conscience. The Puritan fathers who protested against the religion of the old world and the tyranny of England were peerless speakers, because they felt so deeply upon these subjects. Wendell Phillips, Abraham Lincoln, Henry Ward Beecher moved their auditors as they did because they saw in the slavery they denounced a Devil's invention. No man can be truly eloquent until he is honest. The plainest man, the man ignorant of letters can hold the crowd if he speaks about a subject over which his heart is burdened.

Some of you know the history of the Chinaman named Wang. His features rendered him almost hideous to look upon, but he became the most wonderful teacher and preacher of Hankow and Chung King, and when he died the native Christians said of him, "there was no difference between Wang and the Bible." That was the secret of the eloquence of Jesus of Nazareth.

His spirit was that of a confident man.

He never intimated that He felt Himself unequal to any occasion. He knew His intellectual power, and so made no apologies when Nicodemus appealed to Him. And when the young lawyer came with his questions, He answered as if He were conscious of the fact that divine wisdom were with Him, and notwithstanding the subtility of scribe, and the insidious purpose of Pharisee, He was serene before their catch-questions.

The intellectual supremacy of the Son of God has not been sufficiently insisted upon. There was no philosophy with which He was not familiar; no sophistry before which He feared to stand; no subject to which He hesitated to speak, and His confidence was not that of an inflated spirit, but that of the man who felt His sufficiency and was not deceived.

It is told that Napoleon, in his best day, would lie down to sleep soundly where other generals would not have dared close their eyes, because of confidence in his own ability and in that of his battalions. And it does seem to me that Jesus, the Preacher, put before His successors in office a good example at this point.

If I am to speak for God, what have I to do with fearing the face of man? If my gospel is His gospel, what have I to fear from "the oppositions of science, falsely so-called"; the sophistries of unbelieving men, the scepticisms of the hour, or

all of them combined? The preacher who does not believe with Paul, that "the gospel is the power of God unto salvation," and cannot preach it in confidence that it will conquer, needs to sit at the feet of the Man of Nazareth and learn of Him, for His spirit was that of a confident man.

II. THE STYLE OF JESUS, THE PREACHER.

It is a fact, I suppose, that no preacher has ever made a profound impression upon the public mind without having peculiarities of style that in some measure accounted for his success; and there were elements that entered into the way that Jesus uttered His words that account for the statement of our text, "His fame went throughout all Syria."

He was energetic in preaching. The record gives abundant evidence of that fact. In Luke 4:28 we read, "And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things were filled with wrath." No tame speaker ever excites his auditors to any frenzy. The trouble with the style of many men is that it is not energetic enough to arouse the vilest sinner to opposition. When He ministered in Jerusalem, some of the Jews asked, "Is not this he whom they seek to kill; but lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him." Indeed He did!

In human language there are no such sweet sentences as dropped from the lips of the Son of God, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; Blessed are they that mourn,

for they shall be comforted; blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," etc. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

But the man who supposes that Jesus was always using soft, sweet sentences is unacquainted with the New Testament record. When He spoke to His own disciples, to those who were trying their utmost to do right, He used such sentences. But when He spoke to the scribes and Pharisees, the high-headed, hypocritical pretenders of His time, His words cut like the surgeon's lance, or the simitar of the Saracen. That accounts for the fact that some of the people who heard Him thought that He was Jeremiah, the sweet, soft-speaking prophet, while others said that He was Elijah, God's Son of Thunder.

None of us like to listen to the preacher who stirs us too deeply, who brings our faults before our faces, who convicts and condemns us.

I cannot say I enjoy having my nose frost-bitten and my ears nipped, and when that occurs, I complain agianst the cold; and yet I discover, after all, that the bitter season brings to me the most exuberant health. Long since we learned to listen with the greatest interest to the man whose words stung us deepest, because we knew that he was the man that could break our slumbers and bring us to the light of God's day, and quicken our pulse to the healthiest point; and of all the preachers the

world has seen, Jesus of Nazareth employed the style best suited to this desirable end.

His style was dogmatic also. It could not be otherwise. He was no student feeling his way after the truth and always filled with fear that he had not found it. He was no reasoner who had to call into question every conclusion reached. He was no philosopher spinning out of His own inner consciousness untenable theories, as spiders weave their webs from their own bowels to have them swept away with the first breath or brush. In the Gospel of John (12:49-50) He tells us the source of His information. "I have not spoken of myself, but the Father who sent me, he gave me a commandment what I should say, and what I should speak, and I know that his commandment is life everlasting. Whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."

The world is full of people that rail against dogmatic utterances and seem to think it an evidence of intellectual superiority, and of personal modesty for a man not to be quite certain of anything. Our so-called liberalism boasts itself at this point, and well it may, for in proportion as we depart from the Word of God, our conclusions are uncertain. But the true preacher has nothing to do with such conclusions.

It is not his business to dabble with them. He is not set to originate truth, but to repeat it; not set to formulate theories, but to declare God's

revelation, and he who keeps to that has no occasion of apology, no occasion of hesitancy, no right to be uncertain, and of him the people have no right to complain any more than you have to complain of the messenger boy that brings to you a telegram the purport of which is not exactly what you like. He did not form it; he delivered it. It is all he has to do with it. He has no right to change it in one iota, e'en though he discover that it is not what you expect, or what you would like.

It seems strange that people should not understand this fact, but the bitterest complaints that we have ever heard uttered against preaching have been lodged against the most Biblical statements, and oftentimes against the exact quotations from the Word.

A man present in the Calvary Church, Chicago, listened to my reading the third chapter of Matthew; the 8th and 9th verses; of Mark I; the 35th verse following of the 8th chapter of Acts; and the 4th and 5th verses of the 6th of Romans, and by the time I had finished these he was in a white heat, although I had not uttered a word of comment upon any passage; and to one of my deacons he declared he would never enter my church again, for he would not have any preacher dogmatising to him upon the subject of baptism.

That is what they said to Jesus, but He only replied, " My Father gave this to me to say, and I

will say it,." And that is the only reply that any preacher needs to make.

Dr. Lorimer, in his "Argument for Christianity," affirms that "a preaching based upon God's revelation cannot be anything else than positive."

His style was illustrative. Perhaps no preacher the world has ever heard used as many illustrations as the Son of Man.

Pastor Stalker says of His sermons, "They were plentifully adorned with illustrations." . . . "Christ illustrated truth so constantly that the common objects of the country in which He resided are seen more perfectly in His words than in all the historians of the time." His speech was like a lecture with a magic lantern, scene after scene thrown upon the canvas. He made use of the cup, the platter, the lamp, the candle-stick, the mill-stones, the sewing, of the mother, of a new piece of cloth into an old garment; the putting of wine into old bottles. He pictured the hen gathering her chickens, the children playing in the streets. He painted the lilies of the field. He illustrated, by the crow picking up the seed, by the birds building their nests in the branches of the trees, by the doves, sparrows, dogs, and swine; by the fig tree, by the bramble-bush, by the south wind, by the red sky, by the vineyard and winepress, by the yellow grain, by the sheep and the shepherd. He told stories of the Pharisee and the Publican. He told stories of the Priest and Levite, and of the Samari-

tan, of Dives and Lazarus, of the unmerciful servant, of the robbers in the vineyard, of the prodigal son, of the wicked husbandman, of the marriage of the king's son, of the ten virgins, of the talents, of the two debtors, the friend at midnight, the barren fig tree, the great supper, the lost sheep, the lost piece of money, the unjust steward, the unjust judge, the unprofitable servants, the pounds; and so we might go on!

Years ago I was preaching in a Southeastern city. They were without a pastor, and at a dinner table some brethren were discussing certain men, and I spoke most warmly of Dr. D. A small fellow present, who thought himself some great one, said, "I don't like Dr. D. He is not logical enough. He tells too many tales in the pulpit. I have heard him put eight or ten into a single sermon." I have no doubt that the very circumstance of his copying his Master in that matter accounted for his standing later in the strongest pulpit of England and also of this land, and being reckoned as one of the best Gospel preachers of his day.

The difficulty with the audiences of many men that stand in pulpits is not with the people, but with the dry-as-dust preaching to which they have been subjected until they at last have departed one by one and left the preacher, and the choir and forty of the faithful to hold Sunday night services alone.

Charles Spurgeon, who was himself a good illus-

tration of his claim, said to his students, "Illustrate your sermons. I have heard of a tailor who made a mighty fortune, and who, on his deathbed, called his tailor friends about him and said, 'Before I go, let me give you the secret of my success. Always put a knot in your thread,'" and Spurgeon adds, "Some preachers put in the needle all right, but there is no knot in their thread, so it slips through and they have accomplished nothing. Brethren, what your people will best remember of the sermon preached will be the illustration." In this matter Jesus is the Master, and no successor in office has so made heaven and earth, and all human history contribute by illustration to preaching.

III. THE SUBSTANCE OF HIS SERMONS.

If there were time we should like to speak to you in the third place on the substance of His sermons, and to show that *it was serious.* Read His sermons to see if it be not so.

It was Scriptural! Read His sermons to see if it be not so.

It related to salvation. Read His sermons and see if it be not so.

But with this mere outline we pass to the more interesting point.

IV. THE SUCCESS OF HIS MINISTRY.

It varied with circumstances. There are those

who think that the proper preacher will succeed anywhere, under any circumstances whatsoever; and if failure occurs, it must be the preacher's fault. There were several occasions upon which the Son of God Himself failed or succeeded but measurably!

At Nazareth He accomplished nothing, because the people knew Him, and met His wonderful words with the statement, "Is not this the Son of Joseph, and are not his brethren and sisters with us?" The world is full of folks who can never quite consent to unusual ability on the part of a boy with whose birth and breeding they are perfectly familiar.

There is not one church in twenty that ever calls to its pastorate a man who is born of God within its sanctuary, and brought, by the Spirit, into its membership. The record is that "He could do no mighty works there because of their unbelief."

In the sixth chapter of John we find Him failing at another point. He had taught the people the necessity of receiving Him as the one through whom they should be saved, and had said "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life," and immediately there was a scattering of His congregation, "and from that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him," and there were only the twelve left, and Jesus said, "Will ye also go away?"

In Gadara, where He healed the man and some

of the people lost their hogs in consequence, they insisted that He should depart out of that land.

So let us learn once for all that it is not the business of any preacher to be popular, to hold every auditor that ever gives him attention, and to keep the good will of all his people. His first business is to declare the counsel of God, and his second business is to sweetly abide the consequence.

Popularity is not the most difficult thing. I have no doubt Dr. S. enjoys it since he has turned dancing master.

Dr. Robert F. Horton, an Englishman with higher critical tendencies, but one who wields a facile pen, says, "There is a clergyman here in a fashionable English watering place who lives to suit himself, and tells his people not to follow his practice, but to act upon his precepts instead. His conduct was notoriously out of harmony with the Gospel, and yet his church was always crowded with young men and women who were only too glad to find a doctrine which could reconcile a certain religious profession with an unmodified worldliness."

There is much of truth in what a socialist writer said, "It is through the sacrifice and failure of the individual that human emancipation has proceeded from the beginning. Our ability to divinely fail for right's sake is the real measure of our faith. It is the victory of failure that overcometh the world."

And we are glad to say this, because there are some of our brethren who could not without being charged with self-defense. If our house were empty, if the people to whom we have preached had turned away, such utterances would appear to be in self-defense, but in the presence of a company which for twenty-seven years has not waned but waxed, we say that the Son of God was not a success under all circumstances, and that when the preacher fails the fault may be his, and it may be also the people's to whom he has ministered.

There are churches in which no mortal man could succeed unless the Spirit of God should come upon them to regenerate, and we cheerfully attribute the blessing that has been upon the people in our sanctuary as much, yea much more to the spiritual atmosphere that the godly people of the membership have created, than to the pastor's work. And if the Son of God failed or succeeded according to whether the people refused Him or exercised faith, the preacher of this present hour ought to pass through exactly similar experiences, and will if he is faithful to his commission.

But the failure of Jesus Christ was not His common experience. There were those who denied that He had any success, and yet our text tells us that the multitudes followed Him. His words moved the people of all Syria, and of all Galilee, and of Decapolis, and of Jerusalem, and of Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

It is amusing to see how certainly some people will insist that the preacher they do not particularly fancy is a failure. In Chicago, years ago, I talked with a man about the one Baptist pastor of that city who was winning more souls, planting more missions, raising more money for the spread of the Gospel, and addressing larger congregations than was any man in the entire city, and he said, "Oh, he is a failure!" God send us more such, for we believe that in some measure with him, as we know it was in full measure with the Man of Nazareth, "God was satisfied"! And therein is the preacher's success. God said of Him, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," and of His work Christ Himself said, reviewing it all as He was compelled to do while hanging on the cross, "It is finished. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

I am asking myself, How may I be the best preacher to you? I am inquiring by what means I may lead you, my people, into the richest experience and up to the noblest heights. I am wondering how I can make this First Baptist Church the effective institution God would have it become, and I am compelled to believe the only secret of success for me, the only hope of good for you, the only prospect of power for the First Baptist Church, the only promise of victory for time to come, is in looking unto Jesus and learning of Him; is by putting that peerless Preacher before our eyes to

see Him; is by opening our hearts to listen to Him, that our souls may catch His Spirit and our success become the sort that characterised His efforts.

I am so constituted nervously that I cannot sit under any speaker for a few days without imitating his tones, his gestures. It matters little whether I admire him or not, these things make their impression and it takes weeks for me to shake them off. I remember the struggle to get rid of Mr. Varley's style after he had once visited our church, and for three or four weeks after the departure of dear Dr. Munhall I was chagrined by the consciousness of imitating him and feared that somebody would speak about it. Mrs. Riley did, and was answered, "Dear, don't say a thing about it. I know it, but I cannot help it at the present. It will take me some time to shake it off."

But there is one Preacher at whose feet I want to sit, whose spirit I want to study, into whose style I want to come, so that the success which characterised His ministry and pleased His God may come to pass in some little measure in my ministry, and that man is Jesus of Nazareth, the peerless Preacher of the centuries.

VIII

THE MISSION OF CHRIST

"And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."—MARK 10: 44, 45.

THIS text is born out of one of the trying experiences of Christ's life. James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were apostles in great favour with their Lord. Together with Peter they shared in the very secrets of His life, and were privileged to pass with Him into some realms whither the other nine could not come. But just as Jesus was destined to suffer denial on the part of Peter, and that in the hour when a courageous witness would have been most comforting, so James and John uncovered the weakness of their characters at the very moment when any proper consideration of their Master's interests would have shown them the shame of their words. Jesus had just finished saying, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles; And they shall mock him, and

shall spit upon him, and shall scourge him, and shall kill him. And after three days he shall rise again."

Ah, what a chance that prediction presented for the apostles to press about the Master, and pour out their hearts' love in some fitting expression; assure Him of their sympathy; pledge Him their presence to the last; and promise Him that, when these things were finished, and He had been taken from them, they would heroically, bravely, and faithfully carry on what He had begun to do and to teach. But alas, for the weakness of men, for the inconsiderateness of even Christians; yea, for the utter selfishness of chosen apostles:—"There came near unto him James and John, the sons of Zebedee, saying unto him, Master, we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall ask of thee. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? And they said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and one on thy left hand, in thy glory. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink the cup that I drink? or to be baptised with the baptism that I am baptised with? And they said unto him, We are able. And Jesus said unto them, The cup that I drink ye shall drink; and with the baptism that I am baptised withal shall ye be baptised; but to sit on my right hand or on my left hand, is not mine to give; but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared.

And when the ten heard it, they began to be moved with indignation concerning James and John, and Jesus said, Ye know that they that are accounted to rule over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. . . . But, the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Such is the ability of the Son of man to turn our selfish motives, our most unwarranted words, to our advantage; to take them, and by their very perverseness, teach the contrasting truth.

And oh, what truths are in this text. Let us set them in order before us and then see His own application. Three things here about the Son of Man.

I. HIS SERVICE WAS VOLUNTARY.

"The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and give his life a ransom for many."

He came of His own accord. "The Son of man came." I know that there are passages of Scripture which speak of Him as being sent of the Father,—for instance His words, "He that receiveth me; receiveth him that sent me"; "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel"; in the parable of the king—"He sent unto them his son"; etc. But there is no warrant for the idea that some seem to have, that Christ came because

the Father commanded it and compelled it. In the first place Christ is the Father's equal, and not His inferior, to be commanded. "He thought it not robbery to be equal with God." In the next place He and His Father are so essentially one that no purpose could be indulged by one of them and not enjoyed by the other. Then, the Word is absolutely convincing touching the fact that Christ's visit to earth was as voluntary on His part as was His commission from the Father clear.

It is commonly conceded that the words of the Psalmist are Messianic, "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Ps. 40:7-8). That is why Paul, in his epistle to Titus, could speak of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, as one who gave Himself for us, "He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." If one turn back to the Old Testament he will find that the deliverers of the people had to be persuaded to undertake their tasks—Moses argued with God against his commission to Egypt; Joshua needed to hear the command of the Lord and be encouraged by the fairest and fullest promises; while Jonah must be sent to the bottom of the deep ere he is ready to execute his commission to Nineveh. It is not unusual for men to require coercion in acceptance of duty. But, as Spurgeon says, "The King

of kings and Lord of lords, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, voluntarily, cheerfully descended that He might dwell among the sons of men, share their sorrows, and bear their sins, and yield Himself up a sacrifice on their behalf." "He made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And, being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

His compassion was His commission. He loved us and gave Himself for us. Ah, that is the motive that makes the most sacrificial service voluntary. I often think of what Victor Hugo wrote into his "Les Miserables." He was speaking of the good Bishop Myriel, and he says, "Sometimes in the midst of his reading, no matter what book he might have in his hands, he would suddenly fall into deep meditation, and when it was over, would write a few lines on whatever page was open before him." And the author tells us that this note was found upon the margin of one volume—"Oh, Thou who art! Ecclesiastes names thee the Almighty; Maccabees names thee Creator; the Epistle to the Ephesians names thee Liberty; Baruch names thee Immensity; the Psalms name thee Wisdom and Truth; John names thee Light; the book of Kings names thee Lord; Exodus calls thee Providence; Leviticus, Holiness; Esdras, Justice; Creation calls

thee God; man names thee Father; but Solomon names thee Compassion, and that is the most beautiful of all thy names." It is a name that is warranted by the Word and by His work. "For the Lord is gracious, full of compassion." "His compassion fails not"; "To the Lord our God belongeth mercy and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him."

II. HIS SERVICE WAS UNSELFISH.

"He came not to be ministered unto but to minister."

He sought no idle sovereignty. There is a vast deal of theology to the effect that Christ was in the world for His own glory, a theology which has no foundation in philosophy or Scripture. Christ's coming to the world was not that He might be enthroned here, and come a prince with power, for men to wait upon Him, and serve Him. One needs to change Henry van Dyke's words but a little to make them speak the very truth here suggested:—"Christ's thought of Kingship was not such as is to be found in the luxurious and licentious palace of the Shah of Persia; but, rather, as in the hospitals of Naples, where the king of Italy bends to help and comfort the poorest of his subjects. He doffed the crown and accepted the cross; He quit the throne for the theatre of suffering and sorrow and the place of needed assistance.

"*He courted no self-aggrandisement.* "Not to be ministered unto but to minister." There was nothing for Him to gain, so far as position or any place of honour was concerned. As one has said—"What could the Infinite God gain? Splendour! Behold the stars; far away they glitter beyond all mortal count.

"Servants! Does He want servants? Behold angels in their squadrons; twenty thousand, even thousands of angels are the chariots of the Almighty.

"Honour! Nay: the trump of fame forever proclaims Him KING of kings and Lord of lords. Who can add to the lustre of that diadem that makes sun and moon grow pale by comparison? Who can add to the riches or the wealth of Him who hath all things at His disposal?" "Not to be ministered unto" did He come. Have you not His own words, "If I honour myself my honour is nothing"? And have you not read the writings of the apostle, "Christ glorifieth not himself to be made an high priest. Though he were a son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered."

The Scriptures are authority for the claim that He kept nothing from the altar of sacrifice. The Revised Version shows that Paul wrote to the Philippians concerning Christ, "He being in the form of God counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, but emptied himself, taking the

form of a servant." And the very term "emptied" is indicative of the fact that He poured out the last particle of a precious life.

His service was unselfish!

III. HIS SERVICE WAS SUBSTITUTIONARY.

"And gave his life a ransom for many."

He gave His life. Who can tell what that means? Far back in the Old Testament and among the Levitical laws was the one, "Ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings. Whatsoever soul it be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people." And later, the reason for this restriction is assigned, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood." But when the Roman soldiers thrust the sword into the heart of Christ and there followed its receding point water and blood, that was not the whole of the life Jesus laid down. The beasts can lay down life after that manner, and they do it when the veins and arteries are open and the life is let out. Nor was it merely the life of a common man that was contributed on this cross. There is a difference in men. All life is precious, but all human lives are not equally valuable. When, some years ago, the strike was on in the city of Chicago, a friend of mine, serving in the Illinois Infantry, heard his captain say in defense of the command to shoot, which he had

given, and which resulted in the death of a number of labourers, "Oh, it doesn't matter so much. They are cattle anyhow. One well-bred life is worth a dozen of theirs." That remark struck revolt into the heart of my Christian brother—as it ought.

And yet no two lives are equal. There are poor lives and there are rich lives—in the best use of those terms; lives associated with an abused body, a starved intellect, and a withered soul. Poor indeed! Existences they are. And then there are lives rich in all that makes for nobility—rich in thought, rich in experience, rich in noble ambitions, rich in resource, rich in service. And to give such a life is a gift indeed. Who shall estimate even the finite life, much less the Infinite? Who shall tell us the value of the highest human life, much less speak the meaning of the life Divine? Henry van Dyke, speaking of redemption, says of Christ, "Through loneliness and sorrow He descended into our grave. If it were merely a human being who had done this for us it would be much, but since it was a Divine Being it was infinitely more precious. Think of the Almighty One becoming weak, the glorious One suffering shame, the Holy One dwelling amongst sinners. The very Son of God pouring out His blood for us upon the accursed tree! It is this Divinity in the sacrifice that gives power to reconcile and bind our heart to God." "Herein is love,

not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John: 4: 10).

He gave His life a ransom. In his first epistle to Timothy, Paul confirms our text by saying, "There is one God and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time." The word ransom refers always to a price paid to procure again liberty—lost by debt; to recover the slave, who has sold himself, to his freedom. And, strange to say, the Jews in olden time seemed to have had an idea that they had sold themselves to the Evil One, and must be bought back unto that God who rightly owned them. Consequently there was a redemption price. For every Israelitish soul, the tithe drachma must be paid by the rich and the poor alike, ere one could be enrolled as the redeemed of the Lord. The day has come when men are trying to disavow the whole theory of redemption at the cost of Christ's life.

Wm. Fredrick, in his volume "Three Prophetic Days," after having written most logically and Scripturally for 190 pages, strangely turns aside to say, "The Bible nowhere teaches that Jesus was our substitute, and was crucified for us, or in our stead. It does teach that He is our example, and the way to eternal life." And again, "Jesus does not bear any of our sins and griefs, but He does what is infinitely better for us, in

that He teaches us to bear our own sins and griefs. He can no more bear our sins than the mother can walk for her child."

"To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this Word there is no light in them." The text says, "He gave his life a ransom for many."

Long ago, Isaiah, by the pen of inspiration, fully elaborated the atoning work of Christ, and, contrary to the claim of these modern writers, Isaiah says:—"Surely he hath borne our griefs (or, as the Hebrew says, our sicknesses) and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; and the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Paul writes to the Romans in these words, speaking of Jesus—"He was delivered up for our trespasses"; and again that "He died for the ungodly." And yet again he says, "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scripture." Peter, in his first epistle, says, "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God" (3:18). And this strong expression is employed by the same apostle: "who his own self bare our sins in his body

upon the tree, that we, having died unto sins, might live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." It will be a dark day for the Church of God when it departs from the teachings of the Word on this essential truth. "He gave his life a ransom."

In his sermon on "Conqueror from Edom," Phillips Brooks says—"My friends, far be it from me to read all the deep mystery that is in this picture. Only this I know is the burden and soul of it all, this truth, that sin is a horrible, strong, positive thing, and that not even Divinity grapples with him and subdues him except in strife and pain. What pain may mean to the Infinite and Divine, what difficulty may mean to Omnipotence, I cannot tell. Only I know that all that they could mean, they mean here. This symbol of the blood bears this great truth, which has been the power of salvation to millions of hearts, and which must make this conqueror the Saviour of our hearts, too, the truth that only in self-sacrifice and suffering could even God conquer sin.

"Sin is never so dreadful as when we see the Saviour with that blood upon His garments. And the Saviour Himself is never so dear, never wins so utter and so tender a love, as when we see what it has cost Him to save us. Out of that love, born of His holy suffering, comes the new impulse after a holy life; and so, when we stand at last purified by the power of grateful obedience, binding our

holiness and escape from our sin close to our Lord's struggle with sin for us, it shall be said of us that we have 'washed our robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.'"

Major Whittle tells a story of a company of bushwhackers in Missouri under arrest during the days of the Civil War. They were sentenced to be shot. A boy touched the arm of the commander and said, "Wouldn't you allow me to take the place of the man standing yonder? He has a family and will be greatly missed." When the officer gave his permission the boy stepped forward, and the command to shoot was given. The boy fell dead, and in that land today is a grave inscribed, "Sacred to the memory of Willie Lear. He took my place." If I understand the Book in any measure that is the meaning of this text, "He gave his life a ransom." My life and yours were redeemed at such a price! The Son of God stood in the sinner's place, and in His own body and spirit endured the judgment due sinners; and having paid the redemption price, demands as His eternal right your pardon and mine; your freedom and mine; your life and mine!

I am glad for the concluding word:

He redeemed a multitude. A dying monk is said to have put aside extreme unction, all the ceremonies of the church, and lifting his eyes to heaven he said, "Tua vulnera Jesu"—"Thy wounds, my Jesus! Thy wounds, my Jesus!" It is blessed to

know that that monk was only one of a multitude whose hope of life rests in the same crucified one. If one would like to know how many, turn to the book of Revelation, the seventh chapter, and read, "After this, I beheld and lo, a great multitude which no man can number, out of every nation, and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cry unto our God which sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb."

There is a glorious passage in the epistle to the Romans which reads:—"Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned:—for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam until Moses, even over them that had not sinned, after the likeness of Adam's transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come. But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many" (Romans 5: 12-15 R. V.).

IV. HIS SERVICE WAS AN ENSAMPLE.

Jesus distinctly tells us so in the text of this chapter, "Whosoever would be first among you

shall be servant of all." And then illustrates, "for the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister."

Christ's conduct, then, is choice, not coercion. The grace of giving sums up God's whole sentiment of service. "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart so let him give. Not grudgingly or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver." And again, "The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the Children of Israel that they bring an offering. And every one that giveth it willingly with his heart, they shall take my offering." There is not a service we are to render to God, but this same spirit of willing response is to characterise it. What would God have you do? Teach in the Sunday School; take a class in a mission; go on the street and give out invitations to the Gospel services; go sit down beside some convicted or indifferent soul and speak the words of truth and life; give of your means for the advance of the Gospel; give your children for work on the foreign field; give yourself for whatsoever He saith. It must be done willingly, cheerfully. Aye, even gladly, or else it can hardly be acceptable unto God.

Years since, at a Christian Alliance camp meeting at Round Lake, Saratoga, there was present a Miss Louise Shepherd. Her home was in New York, and the season before she had been a society belle in this city of Saratoga. But the grace of

God had come into her heart and she had professed conversion. One morning the hour was given to a study of foreign mission work. An earnest address had been delivered by Dr. Simpson, and an appeal was made for money to send the light to men and women who sit in darkness. And to the surprise of many, Miss Shepherd walked forward, stripped the diamonds from her fingers, and laid them down on the table, saying, "I purpose to give these now to carry forward the work among the heathen. I regard them as useless ornaments, but I know their value to the cause of Christ and I gladly contribute them." There were thousands of dollars that immediately followed. But you will agree that if Miss Shepherd had made that sacrifice with tears and agony, and because God had commanded it, the people would not have been stirred, and such a spirit take possession of them that day when they saw this young woman twenty-two years of age, illustrating Moses' words, "All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee."

When, some time ago, Miss Edna G. Terry returned to China for her second term of service as a missionary, in a degraded section, she said:— "If we went for money there is not enough money to induce us to live amid the depressing influences of this heathen darkness. But when we consider that it is for Christ's sake, and feel the necessity, we willingly, aye, gladly undertake the service for

Him." And this same Miss Terry was one of the young women who, in the Boxer trouble, just as willingly laid down her life.

Oh, beloved, living as so many of us this day in a beautiful land, swept about on every side with surpassing scenery, surrounded with luxuries, and enjoying the fruitage of the first civilisation of the world, and the favour of the very God of the heaven, Himself, can we not be Christians in the best sense of the word, " ministers and servants of the Lord Jesus Christ "?

Christ's supremacy comes through service. Christ never said to these two ambitious apostles that there was no higher place in His Kingdom. But He did say that the highest place was appointed for the man who rendered the best service, who could endure the most suffering, who could make the greatest sacrifice. The longer I live the more profoundly I am impressed with the fact that these opportunities for service are varied and all suited to the conditions of every man who has in him the spirit of service. One doesn't have to be a preacher in order to prove the truth that service to Christ makes for the highest character. He does not necessarily need to express himself in words; gifts and deeds are as eloquent as language, and sometimes even more effective, and the humblest service and the smallest gifts may be the means of one's exaltation to the highest honour. In 1877 Mr. Moody was holding meetings in Boston. Fol-

lowing his usual custom, he went to a fine-looking man in the front seat and asked, "Are you a Christian?" "Yes," replied the man. "Then go over and talk to that woman." "Oh, I can't do that. I never tried to speak to an inquirer." "But she is a woman just ready to come to Christ, and you said you were a Christian, didn't you?" "Yes, but I can't do it." Mr. Moody left him and went to the woman at once. The babe in her arms was so restless that she could pay but little attention to his words. And that fine fellow, seeing the situation, came down where they were, and, smiling at the baby, and taking a piece of candy from his pocket, carried her off to another part of the room and for an hour kept her while Mr. Moody was able to lead the woman to Christ. And speaking of it afterward Moody said, "I think an especial blessing rested upon that service, for not only was the mother converted, but her little girl became a Christian at the age of twelve, through her mother's influence, and proved to be one of the most aggressive workers."

Beloved, service for God has the way of success. It is not mine to say how you shall render it. The Spirit Himself alone can prescribe that, but I tell you the chief places in heaven are reserved for the man who can be baptised with the baptism Christ was baptised with—the baptism of service; the baptism of suffering, of sacrifice.

All Christ's sacrifice is substitutionary. We

never put aside a single pleasure for Christ's sake; we never crucify a single lust of the flesh in His name; we never make a sacrifice of time; but we are illustrating the doctrine of substitution—we are doing this that another might be blessed by it—whether we know it or not. There are plenty of people who are willing to tell you that you are foolish to be giving of your means and your money to help other people out of their poverty; to bring benighted souls out of sin, and consequent suffering. They think that charity begins at home. And one is to consider himself first, last and all the time. And yet the sanest judgment of the civilised world is to the fact that a man who makes sacrifices for another's sake is the one living an ennobling life. I never think of Gov. Briggs, of Massachusetts, without remembering how perfectly he illustrated the great principle of this chapter's text. You know that for years he went with a cravat on his neck, but no collar. People attributed it to eccentricity, and he permitted it and was silent. After his death the secret came out. One day, talking with a drunkard, he was trying to persuade him to let the drink alone, and among other things said, "You know there are many things we do that are not necessary." "Yes," said the man, "for instance, it is not necessary for you to wear that collar." Governor Briggs immediately replied, "If you will agree never to take another drink, I will agree never to wear a collar." "I will do it," said

the inebriate. And so one man was saved. And when the Governor died they laid him in the coffin without a collar, and one man, looking down into his face, was strengthened in his resolve to be true to his pledge, as he remembered what another had done for his sake.

And it is in the power of many of us to part with comforts, that men under the power of sin may be brought to Christ.

"No radiant pearl which crested fortune wears,
No gem that twinkling hangs from beauty's ears
Shines with such lustre as the tear that flows
Down manly virtue's cheek for others' woes."

IX

THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST

"There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."—I Tim. 2:5-6.

THE Apostle's assertion is warranted by His Master's words in Matthew 20:28 and Mark 10:45. This was a part of the faith once for all delivered. The age in which we are living is ripe with scepticism. Young people are in danger of believing a sneer at the faith of the fathers a sign of smartness. As Dr. Lorimer once said: "Young men, very young men have been known to talk flightily of the world's dispensing with religion; of this age having outgrown its authority; and of themselves having attained to such enlightenment of mind and of liberty of thought as to be quite delivered from subjection to its influence and teaching." Some older men who take their knowledge at second-hand, hearing of the work of higher critics, have concluded that Jehoiakim's pen-knife has at last prevailed, and the Word of God is cut to pieces, and the pillars

of Christianity are removed, and the whole system is ready to collapse.

At the time of the Imperial Diet at Augsburg in 1630, when the teachings of the Bible seemed in imminent danger of being overthrown and Chancellor Bruck was filled with alarm, lest that should be accomplished, Martin Luther, the master of logic, wrote to him: "I have lately seen a miracle. As I looked out of the window at the stars and God's whole heavenly dome, I nowhere saw any pillars on which the Master had placed such a dome, but the heavens fell not, and the dome still stands fast. Now, there are some who seek such pillars, and would like very much to feel and grasp them, but because they cannot do it, they tremble and writhe, as if the heavens would certainly fall for no other reason than that they do not see or grasp the pillars"; but I would sooner expect to see the heavens fall than one jot or tittle of all the Word fail. The Psalmist said: "The counsel of the Lord standeth forever," and Paul wrote to Timothy touching Hymenæus and Philetus, who had erred from the truth, and had overthrown the faith of some, "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure. Having this seal the Lord knoweth them that are his."

The test to which Isaiah subjected the philosophers of his time is the true test for all philosophy and all scepticism. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this Word it

is because there is no light in them." Some time since there was talk of a heresy trial for a noted minister because he was supposed to have departed from the Presbyterian standards. In our judgment, it amounts to very little whether a man stand by the standards of his church or not except those standards be supported by the Scripture. It makes little difference whether one speak the shibboleth of his sires or not, unless those sires rightly studied and understood the Word of God. But so far as the faith of the fathers is in accordance with the law and the prophets, it is the faith to which we must hold fast or else go utterly adrift. Now, in the light of our text, let us consider some of the great subjects involved in the same, and included by our subject.

I. SIN.

"The law and the prophets" spoke to this subject, and the fathers formulated their opinions. The law and the prophets agreed: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." The apostle said: "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us; if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins."

Both Moses and Ezekiel agreed in their definition of sin,—"*the transgression of the law.*" "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil," the law said, "thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," and in

his first epistle, John wrote: "Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law." For hundreds of years now, the Christian fathers have not so much interpreted Moses, Ezekiel and John as they have accepted their statement. This modern fad of a faith which says in so many words, "God or goodness could never make men capable of sin; that it is the opposite of good, that is, evil which *seems* to make men capable of wrong, and that evil is but an illusion, and error had no real basis except belief," is as far removed from the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel as it is from the faith of the Christian fathers, and instead of calling it "Christian Science," it ought to be named "Unchristian Scepticism."

Again, the fathers reckoned sin a voluntary iniquity. Dr. van Dyke, in the face of much argument to the contrary, says: "It can only be regarded as a 'deliberate choice.'" And again, "nothing that Jesus said or did led His disciples to minimise or disregard sin, to cover it up with flowers, to transform it into a mere defect or mistake, to deny its reality and explain it away, to say, 'the evil is nought, is null, is silence, implying sound.' The whole effect of His mission, whatever form it may have taken, whatever His teachings may have been—its undeniable effect was to intensify the consciousness of sin as a fatal thing." It ought not to be difficult for one who loves the

Scripture to decide between that definition of sin which declares "it is nothing, silence, implying sound," and the teaching of our fathers concerning the same sad experience. Saint John says: "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil." Paul declares: "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God," and again, "Death passed upon all men for that all have sinned." James adds: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all," while John of Patmos writes, "If we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar and his truth is not in us."

When one listens to that modern argument, to the effect that Satan does not exist, and that sin is only an illusion, and the only power in this world is God, he is strongly reminded of the discussion that occurred at Northampton between Dr. Emmons, who boldly taught that God was the author of sin, and some Christian men of that place who emphatically denied it. When the discussion had waxed hot, one of Emmons' opponents said: "Recently, while travelling in West England, I had a vision, and saw a great black cloud out of which gradually developed a figure much like a man, only hideous in his mien. He told me he was the Devil, and when I inquired where he was going he flew into a great rage and said that every mean crime, great or small, committed in England was

laid to his charge, and that he was starting to Northampton, America, where such transactions were charged to the Almighty instead." "Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."

The fathers also believed that sin was deadly and destructive. We have seen that "the law and the prophets" were responsible for this faith of our fathers, the first teaching, "the soul that sinneth, it shall die," and the second saying, "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

The great Dr. Guthrie, speaking of this universal derangement of humankind, said: "Look now at sin. Pluck off that painted mask, and turn upon her face the lamp of God's Word. We start—it reveals a death's head. I stay not to quote texts descriptive of sin. It is a debt, a burden, a thief, a sickness, a leprosy, a plague, a poison, a serpent, a sting: everything that man hates it is; a load of curses, and calamities beneath whose crushing, most intolerant pressure the whole creation groaneth. Name me the evil that springs not from this root—the crime that I may not lay at its door. Who is the hoary sexton that digs man a grave? Who is that painted temptress that steals his virtue? Who is this sorcerer that first deceives, and then damns his soul? Sin. Who with icy breath, blights the fair blossoms of youth? Who breaks the hearts of parents? Who brings old

men's gray hairs with sorrow to the grave? Sin. Who, by a more hideous metamorphosis than Ovid fancied, changes gentle children into vipers, tender mothers into monsters, and their fathers into murderers of their own innocents? Sin. Who casts the apple of discord on household hearths? Who lights the torch of war, and bears it blazing over trembling lands? Who, by divisions in the church, rends Christ's seamless robe? Sin. Who hurls reason from her lofty throne, and impels sinners, mad as Gadarene swine, down the precipice, into a lake of fire? Sin."

But it is only saddening to listen to the Scripture teachings concerning sin, unless one searches farther into the Word to find out a second subject in which the Apostles, Prophets, and the fathers were interested, namely,—

II. ATONEMENT.

I hardly need to define this term. Break the word up and it reveals at once its own meaning, "at-one-ment." It is simply the process of reuniting those who, rightfully belonging together, have wrongfully separated. Years ago a young man came to me for a private conversation. Between sobs he managed to tell me how drunkenness on his part had resulted in his wife's separating herself from him. And as the great waves of sorrow surged over his sobered spirit, he said: "I shall die unless we can be brought together again."

I managed, a day or two later, to get them together in my study, and, through counsel and prayer, effect a permanent reconciliation. By my counsels I made atonement for them. But, when in Hall Caine's "Bondman," Michael Sunlocks and his beautiful Greeba had been separated, and he was living under the condemnation of civil law, and labouring under false impressions and going blind at the same time, there was but one way in which to effect atonement for them, and that way Jason the Red took when he turned the key that unlocked Michael's cell, and led him out to be again with Greeba, and to have his misunderstandings corrected, his eyes opened, and to come into a perfect knowledge of her unspeakable and unfaltering affection; and turned the key again to lock himself in until the time of sunrise when Jorgen Jorgenson's soldiers should come and pour lead into his body, and leave him a lifeless corpse on the sunlit hill. He effected an atonement. And it was this method of atonement our Master employed for the sake of sinful men. He brought them back to God by standing in their stead, and dying, so that they living could enjoy the Infinite's love.

The old faith was that "man's need made such atonement necessary." The law declared it, the prophet affirmed it, the fathers believed it.

We listened one day to a talk on Prohibition by Oliver Stewart, in which he made tender and beautiful reference to the death of Nathan Hale.

He told how, when he walked down Broadway, New York City, near the City Hall, he came in view of the bronze statue. The arms are pinioned, the feet are tied with cords, the shirt collar is thrown open, the handsome face is marred with the shadows of the sufferings that preceded death. And, at first thought, you might imagine that the statue was the statue of a criminal, but when you read the inscription on the pedestal, "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country," and underneath that splendid sentence the name, "Nathan Hale," it leads your thought back into the history of that Revolutionary time, and back to the day when the American forces found it necessary to send one of their men in disguise into the English camp. And when the commanders said, "The man who undertakes this may be detected, and if detected, will certainly be executed by the enemy," Nathan Hale stood forth and said: "For my country's sake, I will go." He knew that it might mean death. But he also knew that it might effect deliverance and bring victory.

Do you remember what Caiaphas the High Priest said, when the chief priests and the Pharisees were arguing concerning Jesus, "If we let him alone, all men will believe on him, and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and our nation." Caiaphas said unto them, "Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient that

one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not; and this spake he not of himself; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation, and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad."

The law and the prophets are agreed *that in His grace God provided atonement.*

The fathers have been faithless concerning some doctrines of Scripture and confused regarding others, but never once have Christian men misunderstood John 3 : 16,—" God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life." It does seem that a proper understanding of that single Scripture ought to suffice to bring men to the keenest sense of sin and also to show them the way of salvation out of it.

Dr. Chapman tells us, that just over the line that separates Indiana from Ohio and on the Ohio side there lived an old woman who was the terror of all who had seen or heard of her. She was finally arrested, and sent to the Columbus Penitentiary. She broke every law of the institution, and they exhausted every form of punishment upon her. Times without number they had sent her to the dungeon, and for weeks at a time she lived on bread and water. Finally an old Quaker lady from the same part of the state asked permission to see

her. The prisoner was led into her presence with the chains upon her hands and feet. With downcast eyes she sat before the messenger of Christ. The old Quaker lady simply said: "My sister." The old woman cursed her, and then she said: "I love you." With another oath, she said: "No one loves me." But she came still nearer, and taking the sin-stained face in both her hands, she lifted it up and said: "I love you, and Christ loved you." She kissed her face first upon one cheek and then upon the other, and she broke the woman's heart. Her tears began to flow like rain. She rose to her feet. They took the chains off, and until the day of her death they were never put on again, but like an angel of mercy she went up and down the corridors of the prison, ministering to the wants of others.

It is the goodness of God that leadeth thee to repentance, and the man who is not brought to reconciliation with the Father by the sight of His suffering, dying Son, whose agony on the cross was the only adequate expression of God's pity and love for the sinner, is a lost man, and his heart is already turned to stone.

Finally, the fathers held that *Christ's atonement was the one and only way of salvation;* and the law and the Gospel agreed together in confirming the fathers in this faith. It was Moses who wrote of the seed of woman, and of the serpent, "it shall bruise thy head," and it was the great apostle who

said: "God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then being justified by his blood we shall be saved from wrath through him, for if when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life; and not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ by whom we have received the atonement" (Rom. 5:8-11).

Dr. F. B. Meyer tells the story taken from Adelaide Procter, of a young girl who had lived centuries ago in a convent in France. She was sweet and pure and admired of all who saw her. Her work was to care for the altar of Mary, and answer the portal. Wars swept over France, and brought the soldiers to the convent, and one that was wounded was given into her care. When he recovered he persuaded her to leave the convent. She went with him to Paris, where she lost her good name and everything that made life worth living.

Years passed, and she came back to die within the sound of the convent bell. She fell fainting upon the steps, and there came to find her, not such a one as she had been, but such a one as she would have been, a pure and noble matron. She picked her up and carried her into the convent, and placed her on her bed. All the years that she had been gone, she had faithfully done her work, and none knew of her disgrace; so she glided back into her

old place, and until the day of her death no one ever knew of her sin. All this Christ has done for me. I like to think that I was chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, that He had me in mind when He suffered and died, that He has made up before God for all that I have failed to do, and when I stand before Him, it will be as if I never had sinned in all my life.

X

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION

"He is risen, as he said."—MATT. 28:6.
"While they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight."—ACTS 1:9.

THE question proposed for this discussion involves the very citadel of Christianity. The apostle Paul reasons, with a logic that cannot be gainsaid, that "if Christ be not risen from the dead our faith is vain." The dead have perished and the living are without hope.

But the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is in itself not sufficient. The ascension is absolutely necessary to the completion of His claims, and the exercise of His powers. Our question, then, couples two words which are complementary. The resurrection without the ascension would prove nothing more than a reanimation; a Lazarus and not a Lord. An ascension without a resurrection would demonstrate nothing better than translation—a prophet Elijah perhaps; but not the Son of God with whom is all power.

It was a marvelous thing that Jesus was begotten

by the Holy Ghost. But even that would not demonstrate, above discussion, His essential deity. Adam was the generation of the Spirit and not that of a human father. The working of miracles on the part of Jesus is not a sufficient evidence of His claim. Miracles occurred under the hands of Moses, and Elijah, and others, who were nothing more than men of marked faith in the Almighty. The one who sets up a claim as the very Christ of God must not only bring us certain evidence of Divine appointment, such as mortal men have enjoyed, but a chain of evidences stretching from His first appearance in the world clear on to His second coming, and every link thereof must bear the imprint of the superhuman.

It will be conceded, I think, that the central argument, of all the arguments presented in the name of Christ, rests with this question, Did He rise from the dead and ascend into heaven?

In answer to that I bring you first of all these texts from the Scripture, and in elaboration of these suggest some thoughts for solemn reflection.

I. ARGUMENT FOR THE RESURRECTION.

It is not begging the question to appeal to the Bible for arguments of the resurrection. Even infidels concede that the Old Testament Scriptures were in the hands of men when Jesus of Nazareth walked the earth; and very few intellectually honest men question that the New Testament was

born within a century after His reputed ascension. If, therefore, they are not trustworthy, scepticism has already enjoyed two thousand years of opportunity to disprove their statements. If, at the end of this time, the statements stand and gather to themselves an ever-increasing company who consent that they have made good their right to a place in the catalog of historical facts, why should we not appeal to them in discussing the very subject that gave them their existence?

According to the Scriptures there are many lines of argument for the resurrection. Let me make mention of four.

The argument of the Empty Tomb. "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matt. 28: 1-6).

That statement is either true or false. If false, why did not the enemies of Christ expose the de-

ception? That He had enemies not even infidels question. That He was hunted to the cross, no one now disputes. That He was buried is as certain as the execution of Roman law. What became of the body? This was the very thing His enemies had feared. They had reminded Pilate of His prophecy, "After three days I will rise again," and had asked that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day. And Pilate had said unto them, "Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can." "So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch." But when the resurrection was accomplished "some of the watch came unto the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, "Say ye, his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught, and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."

It is a singular thing, yet a certain one, that people can never manufacture a falsehood the various parts of which can hang together. And when they asked the watchers to testify that they had slept on duty until Jesus had been stolen away from His grave, they confessed to a fault, of which

Roman watchers dare not be guilty on the very peril of life itself; and yet, from that hour no better explanation of an empty tomb has been furnished the world. Within a century after these reputed events the whole Roman empire was permeated by the doctrines of Christ, and men by the thousands and tens of thousands believed on Him as risen from the dead. The argument that entered into the conviction of the first century was that of the empty tomb.

There is the argument of the word of the angel to the women. When you get together a company of spiritualists, everyone expecting to see a spook, it is fairly easy to fool the crowd. Turn the lights low, secure a ventriloquist, or even a good actor, and your purpose is accomplished. But when the sceptical are present, the performance is commonly balked. They are not looking for spooks and they do not see them. These sceptics are valuable in uncovering fakes and pretenders. But Christ convinced sceptics in every instance.

The women who went to His tomb were sceptics. As much as they loved Him they never expected to see Him alive again. They went not for the purpose of anointing a risen Christ; but to embalm a dead One. They would not believe in the resurrection even on the authority of the angels' testimony; and that, notwithstanding the fact that the two angels were in shining garments and they felt compelled to bow down their faces to the earth in

their very presence. They were not even convinced when the angels reminded them of the prophecy, "The Son of man must be delivered unto the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again," though it is distinctly declared that "they remembered his words." Not until they had seen Him, not until they had heard His voice, were they convinced.

The apostles were sceptics everyone. It is reported that the words of these women "seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not."

Peter and John went on a tour of personal investigation; and when they beheld "the linen clothes laid by themselves" they were not convinced, but "departed wondering."

The two on the way to Emmaus were sceptics when Christ fell in with them, for He had to argue with them from the Scriptures that He was to be "condemned to die and be crucified and raised again the third day."

Thomas would not even take the testimony of his brethren, and insisted that nothing short of his own senses would cause him to believe.

Paul was so unbelieving that he persecuted every man who named the name of Christ. And yet, one after another, they were compelled to capitulate and accept as true what the angels had said to the women, "He is risen." The word of an angel might, in itself, seem to have some authority, but when that word is attended by such evi-

dences as to convince man after man against his expectation, utterly setting aside his scepticism, who will question its weight?

Again, there is the argument of the sight and statements of sane men. Paul splendidly sums this up in his epistle to the Corinthians. He says, "He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: after that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain until this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as one born out of due time" (1 Cor. 15: 5-8).

When Mahomet expired it is reported Omar rushed from the tent, sword in hand, and declared that he would hew down any one who should dare to say that the prophet was no more. But the apostles of Jesus Christ behaved quite to the contrary. They consented that their Hero was dead; they mourned Him as gone forever; they could not believe what their ears heard concerning His resurrection, and it required the indisputable evidence of His personal presence to convince them. When five hundred sane men and women stand up to testify to one thing, who would dispute them without the most overwhelming evidence to the contrary; and where is the evidence that opposed their testimony?

The speech of Christ Himself also must be considered. Matthew does not finish his report of

this evidence until he has recorded the words of Jesus, for the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, unto the place where He had appointed them, and Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." From that time until His ascension, He talked with them again and again. Every touch was a new revelation of Himself. Every word an additional proof. It was the forty days between the resurrection and the ascension that confirmed the faith of His followers, and made them ready to do, to dare, to die!

Dr. Lorimer, in his "Argument for Christianity," remarks upon a time when, more than a hundred years ago, a little Baptist Association deliberately resolved on "the reduction of heathenism," and determined on sending out an army of occupation. The stupendous audaciousness of the purpose excited the ridicule of not a few worldly-wise individuals, and indeed was without a parallel except in the earliest aggressions of the church. And what rendered the movement more entertaining to the scoffers, and what imparted to it more and more of the spirit of desperate rashness and presumption, was the fact that the enterprise was entrusted to

the generalship of a 'consecrated cobbler' who himself constituted nearly all that there was of the expedition."

But bold as was that endeavour, and marvelous as was the faith that attended it, bolder still was the faith of those poor, plain fishermen in their march upon the heathenism of the world, and infinitely greater was the confidence which they reposed in the Man of Nazareth! What is the explanation? For forty days, He (who had been crucified before their eyes and buried in the tomb of one who had befriended Him, against which a stone had been sealed, and about which a watch had been set,) walked with them, and inspired them, and finally ascended into the heavens before their very eyes! Aye, that was the foundation of their faith. That is the explanation of their courage. That is the secret of their willingness to be martyrs! That the *rationale* of the rise of the Church.

II. CERTAINTY OF THE ASCENSION.

To this subject of the ascension the Scriptures also speak.

They had prophesied it should come. What is the meaning of the Psalmist's language, "Thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption"? What is the suggestion except that He was to rise from the dead? And what is the suggestion of the same Psalmist, "Thou hast ascended on high; thou

hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts"? Christ Himself had said to the officials who had been sent to take Him to the chief priests, "Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come" (John 7:22-34). To Mary He replied, also, "I ascend to my Father and to your Father; and to my God and to your God." And it came to pass even as He had said.

People believe far more easily in the natural than in the supernatural. They accept the scientific with a relish they know not for the spiritual. When I was a student at college the transit of Venus occurred. At Aiken, South Carolina, some German scientists drew their meridian circle on a stone and took their observations from it, and then enjoined upon the people to leave that stone in place so that in the year 2004, when the transit of Venus should again occur, observations might be taken from the same meridian circle. Dr. Pierson, speaking of this, said, "Thrones will have been emptied of occupant after occupant; empires will have been lost; and changes, whose number and gravity are too great now to be conceived, will have taken place. Nay, human history may have come to its great last crisis, and the millennial march may have begun. Yet, punctually to the moment, without delay or failure, these students of nature will expect Venus to make her transit

across the sun." They will hardly be disappointed. God's order in nature is such that the great grandchildren of those scientists will see their forebears' predictions fulfilled. But God's order, in the prophecy, is equally dependable. He ascended, even as He had said.

What a demonstration this of His deity! John had testified after this manner, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and our hands have handled of the Word of Life, declare we unto you." It included not only a risen Saviour, but an ascended One. They had seen Him go! His ascension had been their most conclusive proof of His deity. A mortal man might be resuscitated from what seemed to be death; but when resurrection from the grave and ascension are combined who can stand against the argument for Deity?

Charles Spurgeon says, "Whenever I read modern thoughts—and you cannot read long without coming across them—I am glad to get back to facts. And here are some facts. Jesus Christ did rise from the dead—that is true! He did also ascend into heaven, for His disciples saw Him." Is not Spurgeon's faith well grounded? If the testimony of men can be taken touching anything that ever occurred in this world to what fact can you bring better witnesses; witnesses more surely convinced against their expectation; witnesses more

perfectly in accord with what they say; witnesses more ready to seal their testimony with their blood, than were the five hundred who saw Him at once, and who perhaps waited upon one of the hills of Judea and watched until the very moment when the cloud received Him out of their sight? No wonder Charles Wesley wrote:

> "Hail the day that sees Him rise,
> To His throne above the skies;
> Christ, the Lamb, for sinners given,
> Enters now the highest heaven.
> There for Him high triumph waits;
> Lift your heads, eternal gates!
> He hath conquered death and sin,
> Take the King of Glory in."

In that ascension is the explanation of the Church. This great institution must be accounted for. The early apostles did not hesitate to rest their claims to the conquest of the world on the fact of the ascension. They had their commission from an ascended Lord. Their very gifts were imparted by the same ascended Lord. And, in all their services, they looked to heaven "whence also he was to come" again. Christians of the present hour, who have never seen Him, yet know He is in the heavens; this with them is a matter of both history and inner consciousness. Someone tells the story of a lad, standing in the street holding tightly to a string which stretched away into the very

clouds. A man passing asked him what he was doing. "Flying my kite!" The man, looking into the heavens, said, "How do you know that you have a kite, I see nothing?" "Neither do I," he replied, "but I can feel it pull." That is the universal testimony of Christ's men and women. The great Magnet of our souls is the Son of God. Our drawings heavenward are not natural but supernatural. They are not born of the flesh, but begotten by the Son Himself, who hath ascended on high.

"He is gone! and we remain
In this world of sin and pain:
In the void which He has left,
On this earth of Him bereft,
We have still His work to do,
We can still His path pursue;
We can follow Him below,
And His bright example show."

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BOTH.

What of it if Christ be raised and ascended up on high? "Much every way."

Prominent among other things let me mention three.

He, then, is in the Priest's place. When they stoned Stephen unto his death the record says, "He looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." When they banished John to the

Isle of Patmos he turned from the barren wastes about him to the bright world beyond, and oh, what a vision was vouchsafed! "In the midst of the seven golden candlesticks was one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle." What is the significance? Priesthood! That is the girdle the great high priest wore. Hence the significance of the apostle's words, "Seeing, then, that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

He, then, has the power to put away sin. The old priest could do that only by Divine appointment. In fact he did not do it at all, but God did it, sending the message of remission through him. But this ascended One dares to say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." On what ground? Because He was the very God! Sins had been committed against Him; He, therefore, could remit them, and He only. David said, "Against thee and thee only have I sinned." The person who can forgive you is the one against whom you have sinned, and not another. How gracious to know

that the One against whom we have heaped our sins is the Son of God who has ascended to the very heavens and with Him is not only the power, but the spirit of forgiveness. Truly, as Maclaren says, "In Christ's exaltation to the throne a new hope dawns on humanity. . . . This Christ Jesus has tasted death for every man, and so, brethren, sad, and mad, and bad as men may be, the Conquering Captive at the right hand of God's throne is the measure of the pattern of what the worst of us may hope to be." Why? Because He hath power to put away sin.

Again, if He be the High Priest He proffers a free salvation. What is the message from the right hand of the throne? "I will—Be thou clean." What is the message? "Thy sins which are many are all forgiven thee." What is the message? "If ye confess your sins I am faithful and true to forgive you your sins and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness."

Oh, marvel of marvels, that men should neglect this, and run greedily after lesser good! When, several years ago, Dr. Lorenz came to this country he was brought by a millionaire of Chicago to put into place the dislocated hip of Lolita Armour. The attempt was supposed to be successful. The newspapers made a great ado about the marvelous man and his accomplishments. People went wild; his way was thronged, cripples were carried into the light of his presence, and in a southern city

strong policemen wept as they were compelled to say to mothers, bearing their crippled darlings in their arms, " He cannot give you attention," and so turn them away. Such is the enthusiasm for lesser good.

I grant you it is a great thing to have a whole body. I do not blame those mothers for running after Lorenz, a mortal man of very limited power. No, I do not blame them. But I say that men and women will rise up to blame themselves when they wake at last to discover that they have gone through the world crippled in soul, and treating with indifference the claims of that Christ in whom is " all power in heaven and in earth " and who is as willing and able to make them every one every whit whole.

Have you ever looked upon that masterpiece, " Christ—the Consoler," painted by Friedrich Dietrich? One strange feature about it is that he presents Christ as among the European peasants of the present day, His personality and garb contrasting with their rude figures and homely faces. Before Him are the lame, the halt, the blind, the aged, the wounded soldiers, and the toilers, and as He passes His very presence seems to heal and enhearten, and the text for it is, " The whole multitude sought to touch Him, for there went virtue out of Him and healed them all."

Oh, will you cry the praises of a Lorenz, who at best could only give one temporal aid and pos-

sibly relieve a bodily deformity, and pass with indifference the risen and ascended Christ who, by His word, can put away sin, restore the soul to the image in which it was created, and send it forth in health and happiness for time and eternity?

XI

CHRIST, THE INCOMPARABLE

"Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."—PHILIPPIANS 2: 5-11.

THE phrase, "Christ, The Incomparable," is extremely popular at present. It has come to be a custom with all liberal theologians, and almost a habit with outright infidels to pay tribute to the character of Jesus. Unitarians, and even atheists, have well nigh exceeded evangelicals in their laudation of the Man from Nazareth; and the present-day higher critics all say "Amen," when we pay tribute to Him. Renan said, "In Jesus is condensed all that is good and exalted in

all nature." Thomas Paine remarked, "The morality that He preached has not been exceeded by any." Disraeli, the Jew, confessed, "Jesus has conquered Europe and changed its name to Christendom." Rousseau remarked, "If the life and death of Socrates were those of a martyr, the life and death of Jesus were those of a God." When, therefore, a conservative talks either about the accomplishments or character of Jesus, he will find no liberal theologian, and but few infidels, to oppose him. It is only when we come to the question of His deity, involving as it does, atonement for sin through sacrifice and cleansing by the shedding of blood, that they revolt and reveal their real estimate of Christ's claims.

It is a marvelous thing that any man could so live and die as to compel even His enemies to pay tribute to Him; as to force from the lips of the most malignant opponents masterly encomiums, and yet Christ has accomplished that. When Paul penned this epistle to the Philippians this name was not so popular, and yet, by inspiration he proclaimed its coming power, and, for the moment, turned prophet, and the civilised of all later centuries consent to the circumstance that he spake truthfully.

There are three things he says about this Incomparable One.

First of all, God gave to Him

AN INCOMPARABLE NAME.

"Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus; who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a things to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name."

Did you ever ask yourself the question why God gave to Him "a name that was above every name"? In how many respects is that an incomparable name? I shall not attempt to answer that in full; but a few suggestions:

He was incomparable in mental ability. Every apocryphal gospel tells remarkable things about the youth of Jesus. The true Gospels mention little of His youth, but when it is touched, His mental abilities are uncovered. At twelve years of age His parents at the feast, in leaving, miss Him. After they had gone a great way toward home they made the discovery that the lad was not with them, and went back, "and it came to pass, after three days they found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions; and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers."

Again in the Word of God we are told that "He grew," not only "in stature," but "in wisdom,"

and that is easily accepted as a fact. The moment His public ministry begins men stand astounded, and even His enemies consent "never man spake like this man." On one occasion, when He had finished with the delivery of certain parables, He came into His own country, and taught them in their synagogue, "insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren James, and Joseph, and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence, then, hath this man all these things?"

He was a product of no school and yet His speech has given rise to the great schools of the centuries. He was the author of no code of laws, yet His declarations determine the righteousness of all law. He engaged in no philosophical speculations, yet all philosophers are compelled to sit at His feet. He formulated no distinct system of theology, yet the only theology worthy the attention of men, and calculated to do aught for a sinning, dying world, is that which is in the strictest keeping with His wonderful words. Truly, as Dr. Robert F. Horton, of the Old World, once said, "Churches and theologies"—(he might have added, schools)—"have failed us and confused us, but when Christ speaks from the mount all is clear."

He was incomparable in mighty accomplish-

ments. Dwight Hillis never said a truer thing, than when he wrote, "Our wonder grows apace when we remember that He wrote no book, no poem, no drama, no philosophy; invented no tool or instrument; fashioned no law or institution; discovered no medicine or remedy; outlined no philosophy of mind or body; contributed nothing to geology or astronomy, but stood at the end of His brief career, doomed and deserted, solitary and silent, utterly helpless, fronting a shameless trial and a pitiless execution. In that hour none so poor as to do Him reverence. And yet could some magician have touched men's eyes they would have seen that no power in heaven and no force on earth for majesty and productiveness could equal or match this crowned sufferer whose name was to be 'Wonderful.' The ages have come and gone; let us hasten to confess that the carpenter's Son hath lifted the gates of empires off their hinges and turned the stream of the centuries out of their channels. His spirit hath leavened all literature; He has made laws just, governments humane, manners gentle, even cold marble warm; He refined art by new and divine themes, shaped those cathedrals called 'frozen prayers,' led scientists to dedicate their books and discoveries to Him, and so glorified an instrument of torture as that the very queen among beautiful women seeks to enhance her loveliness by hanging His cross about her neck, while new inventions and institutions seem but letters in

His storied speech. Today His birthday, alone, is celebrated by all the nations. All peoples and tribes claim Him. None hath arisen to dispute His throne. Plato divides honours with Aristotle; Bacon walks arm in arm with Newton; Napoleon does not monopolise the admiration of soldiers. In poetry, music and art, and practical life, universal supremacy is unknown. But Jesus Christ is so opulent in His gifts, so transcendent in His words and works, so unique in His life and death, that He receives universal honours. His name eclipses other names as the noonday sun obliterates by very excess of light."

He was incomparable in essential character. In all the days of my life I have never fallen upon an attack of the character of Christ until recently. Rousseau admitted it, Paine paid it tribute, Hume honoured it, and our countryman, Ingersoll, declared, "For the man Jesus, I have infinite respect." Even erratic minds denying the deity of Christ and deriding the claims of the Church, never had the hardihood to decry His character. It remained for a modern, to attempt that defamation and exercise that blasphemy. The world for many centuries, so far as it has read the Scriptures at all, has been well nigh a unit in its exalted judgment of Jesus. In fact, the picture given in the four Gospels is just exactly such as to confirm the basis for Dr. Carnegie Simpson's claim that no such character could ever have been conceived apart

from its actual existence. He quotes J. S. Mill as having declared, "It is no use to say that Christ, as exhibited in the Gospels, is not historical, and that we know not how much of what is admirable has been superadded by the traditions of His followers." It is no use, because, as Mills adds, "who among His disciples, or their proselytes—he might have added, 'who among the poets and dramatists of all the world'—is capable of inventing the sayings ascribed to Jesus or of imagining such a life and character. The only way in the world to account for their work is to suppose that they spoke in utter veracity. They had a model and they copied it faithfully, and because the model was faultless, the reproduction, being faithful, was perfect, also."

This character of Jesus becomes the more resplendent when one remembers the day in which He was born and lived. As another says, "It was an hour when tyranny and crime had gone upon a carnival. It seemed as if despots had determined to leave on earth not one of the gifted children of song or eloquence or philosophy or morals. Julius Cæsar, the writer and ruler, had been murdered. Cicero, the orator, had been assassinated. Herod, who ruled over Christ's city, murdered his two brothers, his wife, Mariamne, slew the children of Bethlehem, and, dying, ordered his nobles to be executed, that mourning for the king might be widespread. Yet in such an era, when He saw a

thousand wrongs to be achieved, Christ maintained His serenity, and reigned victorious over life's troubles." And one might add, He provided a solution for every sorrow and a salvation from every sin.

But the apostle speaks in the next place of

A CONQUERING NAME.

"He gave unto him the name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth."

His triumph in heaven is complete. Two schools of interpreters—yea, twenty—have attempted the book of Revelation. But the two great schools are Prætorists and Futurists. The first of these says that most of the things prophesied in the book of the Revelation have passed already, and the second insist, "Not so; they are all yet to come." Neither is right! Some of them have transpired and others of them are yet to come to pass. Two thousand years ago John, on the Isle of Patmos, was vouchsafed a vision of the open heaven. He saw Jesus in His glorified estate. From Him he received messages for the seven churches in Asia; and then the Faithful and True Witness turned his attention to "the things that must shortly come to pass," and among them He granted to him a vision of the war in heaven. Michael is shown going forth to war with the dragon, "and the dragon

warred and his angels; and they prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast down, the old serpent, he that is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world; he was cast down to the earth, and his angels were cast down with him. And I heard a great voice in heaven, saying, Now is come the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Christ; for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, who accuseth them before our God day and night. And they overcame him because of the blood of the Lamb, and because of the word of their testimony; and they loved not their life even unto death. Therefore rejoice, O heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe for the earth and for the sea; because the devil is gone down unto you, having great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time" (Rev. 12:7-12). Where Christ is, this arch fiend cannot reign; he cannot even remain.

He will accomplish the supremacy of the earth. "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven *and things on earth.*" O, how that declaration from Paul's pen fits into the teaching of the Old Testament worthies. The Psalmist, catching a vision of the ages to come, wrote, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the River unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of

Tarshish and of the isles shall render tribute; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him. For he will deliver the needy when he crieth, and the poor, that hath no helper" (72:8-12). Daniel, also, you remember, says, "I saw in the night-visions, and, behold, there came with the clouds of heaven one like unto a son of man, and he came even to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed" (7:13-14). This is that of which Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15:24-25: "Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet."

All civilisation moves to one end, whether it knows it or not; and all Christianisation has one object, whether it be thoroughly apprehended or not, and that is the conquest of Christ in this world, and the making of a new earth in which dwelleth righteousness. And it shall be done! I know the discouragements of the days intervening, and I know how the delays trouble even the dutiful; I know how apostacy from the faith filches the place

of genuine prophets, and yet I know, on the authority of God's word-prophecies many of which have already found a fulfilment, that we move directly to this conquering by the Christ! God shall bring it to pass. Someone has said, "The century plant takes a hundred years for root and trunk, but blossoms in a night. And nations also shall in a day be born into culture and character." And this same writer says, "And every knee shall bow to the name that is above every name, and He whom God has lifted to the world's throne shall, in turn, lift the world to a place beside Him."

His victory over hell will be acknowledged. There are some people who seem to think that hell is to beat heaven out; that the final victory is to be with the underworld. The text says not so; "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and *things under the earth.*" Satan and his entire host perfectly understand that fact. That is the interpretation of the speech of the devils at the sight of Jesus. They trembled when He drew nigh; begged Him not to "torment them *before their time,*" as if it were perfectly understood that there was a time fixed when every devil that had ever allied himself with the great Dragon, and become a permanent rebel against the Divine government, should cringe at the mention of His conquering name, and perish at the touch of His conquering hand. We wonder, after all, if that is not the in-

terpretation of Revelation 22: 10, where Satan and his associates and all followers, find their fate in the pit, hurled thence by the mighty Son of God. O, His is a conquering Name! At its mention everything of earth is destined to bow: at its mention every saint and angel of heaven will fall on the face; and at its mention every devil in hell will fear and flee away; then "every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

His, then, is

A GOD-GLORIFYING NAME.

It would be an interesting study indeed to run the Scriptures through and see in what respects the name of Jesus glorifies God. O, there are so many! Let me pick out three of these and with that finish.

In that name men are saved from sin. "They shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." There is an eighth wonder in the world today, namely, the denial of sin. The denial of the most evident, the most potent fact of human experience and sane observation. SIN! It is the author of all sorrows; it is the occasion of all doom; it is the call for hell. The whole world is under its blight. Not one noble man has escaped; not one fair woman has gone unscathed. Discouragement, disease, despair and death lie over the earth like a pall.

The name that is an antidote for sin, the man that can withdraw its sting, is the name, the man, that brings to God the greatest glory. In the Orient one of the commonest effects of sin is blindness, consequently when the disciples of Jesus saw one totally stricken by this affliction they addressed their Master, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, Neither did this man sin, nor his parents"; the effect upon him is more remote, it has come down a greater distance, "but that the words of God should be made manifest in him." And Christ healed him, and God was glorified.

The blind are everywhere, the lame lie at many gates, the fevered are found under a multitude of roofs; the deaf, the dumb, the demonised; O, how sin has made havoc with the sons of men. Dwight Hillis spake truly when he said, "Long ago Cleopatra, the daughter of supreme beauty, received sin into her arms, counting it to be an angel of light; but alas, sin broke her heart, and soon she welcomed the viper to her bosom. It was sin that wrecked the palace of David. It was sin that ruined the genius of Solomon. It was sin that stole the purple from Alcibiades and gave him instead the robe of a slave. It was sin that, serpent-like, crawled over the threshold of the palaces in Rome and left its slime within court and banqueting hall. Sin was the flame which blackened the Doge's palace in Venice. Sin was the earthquake

that toppled down the treasure houses of Florence. For Bacon sin was a worm in the bud of his heart. For Byron sin was moth and rust that consumed the mind. For Shelley sin was a vandal that grew by the rapine and murder of the poet's soul."

We are told that when the work of excavation was done in the streets, and the houses of Pompeii were uncovered, and the gathered treasures in bronze and marble and ivories and mosaics were assembled, in a museum, not one single object of them all had escaped some form of injury. The Winged Mercury had arms and legs broken, the white forehead of Venus had a black stain, every precious tablet was cracked to a greater or less degree, while the very rolls found in Pliny's tomb had their writings too faded to read. This is only a type of the havoc sin has made in men. The chief products of the divine artist, broken, scarred, stained, are we all. And Christ came to replace, to heal, to cleanse, to save. No wonder the men who looked upon Him in the old day when He both recovered the sick and forgave the sinner, glorified God, saying, "We never saw it on this wise." O, His is a God-glorifying name!

He glorifies God by transforming the saved. His work is not that of reformation only; it involves transformation. "For whom he foreknew, he also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among

many brethren." "We all with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit" (2 Cor. 3:18).

Henry Drummond, in his matchless booklet, "The Greatest Thing in the World," speaks wonderfully of this transformation, accomplished while we behold the face of the transfigured Christ, and looking on Him, grow like Him in character. Horace Stanton says, "In the gallery of the Vatican at Rome, said to contain of art more genuine treasures than any other on the earth, there hangs a work which stands not only supreme above those others there, but, by the consenting judgment of three centuries and a half, at the head of all the oil paintings in the world—The Transfiguration, by Raphael. It was in the noonday of his life that he began it, and the sublimest conceptions of that peerless spirit are here displayed. A genius of amazing brilliancy, in imagination never yet surpassed, but tender, sensitive, and reverential, was portraying that single scene when the Saviour was manifested to the disciples in His future celestial light, the only time that earthly eyes had yet seen Him in His glory. And, as the artist bent his might upon it, the splendid vision rose; in drawing, grouping, and dramatic power, a work unequalled. It is called the grandest picture ever limner wrought. But, as the last lines were almost

done, God called Raphael. And, over his shadowy bier, they hung this picture; its colours still wet upon the canvas, the last work of that lifeless hand. What a funeral was this—that graceful figure covered with the painter's cloak, the throng of mourners kneeling weeping there; but over all, the breathing beauty and immortal radiance of that heavenly scene, which showed the lustre of the Transfigured Christ. As Raphael in art, so we in spirit, speech and life may delineate the transfiguration of our Lord. And, at our death, the lustre of Christ—crowned and regnant—shall fall on us, to give each his proper splendour. For, "as there is one glory of the sun, another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars, though many stars may draw their radiance from that one central sun; so Christ's glory shall be chiefest; and each of us will have a proper share, all unlike one another, though we all shall be like him."

Yet once more, *God receives glory in that Christ is Lord over death and the grave.* He is our hope of a resurrection. When Lazarus lay dead and was revived—the great New Testament type of the resurrection of the saints—Jesus said to Martha, "Said I not unto thee, that if thou believedst, thou shouldest see the glory of God? So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hearest me. And I knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the multitude that standest around

I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me. And when he had thus spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth," and the glory of God was revealed.

He is the Lord of life out of death; of victory over the grave. In His name saints shall conquer against the last enemy, and troop up in bodies incorruptible, powerful, glorious, spiritual. I have attempted at times, in speaking of the resurrection, to tell my auditors something of what the resurrection body will be. It was an impossible proposition! The most physically perfect man the world ever saw was Jesus on the day of the crucifixion. In His prime at thirty-three years of age, uncorrupted by sin, untouched by any infirmity of body, soul or spirit; and in that body, risen from the dead, one finds the model in the likeness of which all saints shall come forth.

Stanton tells us that, "In the museums of Europe, you see statues of Antinous, that young man of antiquity who was noted for his symmetry and grace. There is the Apollo Belvidere, an artist's sublime conception of the godlike form. In Frankfort you visit Dannecker's famous group of statuary, 'Ariadne on the Panther.' It is in a building especially erected for it. There is the lithe and agile beast. Upon his back the beauteous maiden sits. The drapery half reveals, and half conceals her fine proportions. The expression on her face most sweet. The crimson curtains, which

surround the alcove, mellow the light, so that she almost seems to live. The group is mounted on a revolving pedestal. And, as it turns, you survey it from every side—matchless in its perfect beauty. The Antinous shows the ideal mould of man; the Ariadne the ideal form of woman. But who shall prove that, in the coming world, yea, in the millenium of this world, every man and every woman will not be as beautiful of face and figure as the Antinous and the Ariadne? Those Greek statues were largely representations of the living figures seen in the gymnasia. They were illustrations of the superb physiques of the actual persons of that day. Modern statues are largely copied from them. But surely the figures of the glorified children of God in the New Jerusalem, will be more beautiful than were those of the children of men in ancient Greece."

"This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, over these the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."

It is a glorious prospect, and God Himself is glorified in the sure promise of Christ's victory over death and the grave, and He will be in its final and unspeakable realisation.

XII

CHRIST AND THE CHANGING ORDER

"For many deceivers are gone forth into the world, even they that confess not that Jesus Christ cometh in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the anti-christ. Look to yourselves, that ye lose not the things which we have wrought, but that ye receive a full reward. Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son. If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting: for he that giveth him greeting partaketh in his evil works."—II JOHN 7-11.

THE theme of this chapter is somewhat akin to that of a considerable volume brought from the press some years since by another writer. The speaker has no fear, however, lest this discussion should in any wise be confused with that volume. The theological cleavage will clearly distinguish them. However, they will have one feature in agreement, namely, "history is at one of its turning points," and the Twentieth Century represents a crisis in the experience of the Christian Church!

If it be true that since the days of Kant in

philosophy, and Darwin in science, we have lived in a world of thought peopled with new intellectual citizens," one need not be surprised to find the thinking of the century rather confused since these gentlemen, approaching kindred themes from the separate standpoints of philosophy and science, came to exactly opposite conclusions, Kant contending that in the trial life the strongest and best equipped will finally fall while Darwin insists that the result will be "the survival of the fittest," conclusions which really gave occasion to Schopenhauer's dictum, "We are all fools living in a fool world."

When one gives himself to a study of the progress of that so-called "modernism" which is supposed to have originated with these men, he is compelled to consent that Schopenhauer had much basis for his remarks. Paradoxical as it may sound, John, writing twenty centuries ago, was dealing with the exact propaganda of certain present-day teachers known as "Modern," and we should give candid consideration to what he has to say upon the subject.

Describing their theology he denominates its representatives as the apostles of deception and brings against their propaganda the indictment of infidelity, declaring that all who participate with them are alike members of the anti-Christ. Is he justified in this somewhat rabid arraignment?

THE APOSTLES OF DECEPTION.

He describes them after this manner—"Many deceivers have gone out into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an anti-christ."

Careful consideration of the language used brings out three suggestions.

These are nominal disciples! The phrase employed by John, "have gone out," indicates that they had been members of the Christian fraternity, and had used their place in the church as a vantage point for the propagation of false teachings. In 1 John 2:19 we read of certain ones—perhaps these same—"They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." In other words, men who confessed loyalty to Jesus Christ became apostles of another gospel, the advocates of anti-Christian teaching. Even modern warfare, with all its devices for the destruction of an army, has been able to hit upon nothing more effective than to get an enemy within the camp. No men in all England, during the late war, were able to do her injury as those men who dwelt within her borders, even joining her army, wearing her uniform, using her language, but secretly communicating with and aiding her enemies. The word "spy" has long been a detested one. As a rule, a man who plays

that rôle is not held in esteem by any save those whose interests he directly represents. Paul, writing a letter to the Galatians, declared that he had encountered "false brethren, brought in unawares, who came in privily to spy out the liberty he and his friends enjoyed in Christ Jesus, the intent of whose business was that they might bring them into bondage."

We do not desire to be harsh, nor would we consciously entertain an uncharitable spirit, but we must declare our deepest conviction, namely that the greatest enemy of any church of Jesus Christ is the man who remains in her, assumes to be one of her teachers, calmly wears her good name and yet denies the deity of Him who brought her into being, and disputes the authority of the Book upon which she has, for full twenty centuries, rested her every contention. I regard myself as declaring a most patent truth when I say that "modernism," so-called, is just such an enemy. By lip and pen it has alike rejected Jesus and repudiated the Bible.

It is a matter of more than passing interest also to trace the parallelism between the opponents of John's epistle and the present-day opponents of Jesus.

They denied His physical manifestations! The language in which John indicated them is this, "They confess not that Jesus Christ is coming in the flesh." The King James version, as you recall, has it "is come in the flesh." If that translation

were correct it might refer to the first appearance of Jesus. If the text of the 1911 version is correct, "who confess not that Jesus is coming in the flesh," then the second coming is in the mind of the sacred writer. But in either event that which these false teachers opposed was the physical manifestation of God in Christ Jesus. Truly they have their successors. God manifest in the flesh is a miracle of such transcendent import as to be utterly rejected by our advocates of evolution! They almost universally resort to the statements that Jesus, while being God's best representative, was yet born of Mary and begotten by Joseph. This doubtless is one of those "New Testament concepts," mentioned by a Modernist, "which the modern world, under the dominion of science, finds it impossible to understand, much less to believe."

Concerning the second appearance of Jesus in personal visible form, known as Messianism, we are blithely told that it is a "survival of Judaism and its influence and implications must be removed before we can see the essential elements of the gospel." Of course the resurrection of Jesus is another physical manifestation which, while not expressly mentioned in the text, is involved in the question, and it is now well nigh the common custom among new theologians to hold that New Testament contention to ridicule. In fact, we are plainly asked the question, "If a man believes in a risen Christ without believing in the events of the

first Easter day or in the objective character of the appearances of Jesus to Paul and the other apostles," should "he be excluded from preaching the gospel of salvation?" and are answered "Assuredly not," and we are told that "He, too, can bring and must bring his conviction of the continued life of Jesus to bear upon men and women."

But this raises the logical and inevitable question—"What Jesus is he preaching and whence does he bring either his Master or his message?" Manifestly it cannot be the Jesus of the Bible, for He was "flesh and blood" before His crucifixion and "flesh and bones" after His resurrection, physical and visible in His ascension, and destined to be visible and personal in His glorious second appearance. What nonsense, then, to imagine that by the adoption of a name to which there was never a corresponding reality, one has created a personality and provided a message. Such "poetry" as the following is of the essence of inanity:—

"If He lived or died, I may not know,
For who shall disprove the words of the dead,
Or who may approve of the wisdom they said?
For me He is not of the long ago,
But speaks in the morn of my life, I know."

Who speaks; and what does He say? Is it not true, as one of their own company has confessed, that "When we take away the historical Jesus, we

take away the only Jesus," and "remove the Gospel" and thereby "change the very definition of Christianity itself," "for Christianity as an embodiment of the Gospel is a phase of religion determined by historical facts"? Any Jesus not begotten by the Holy Ghost, born of Mary, crucified on Calvary, raised the third day, ascended to the right hand of God and destined to descend to the earth and take His throne and reign from sea to sea, is as much the figment of a distempered imagination as are the dreams resulting from an overdose of meat, and any message based upon it has no more claims upon intelligent thinking men than do the unintelligible, incoherent babblings of a Mary Baker Eddy.

What would you think of a man who said he believed in George Washington, but not the George Washington who was born in 1732 in Westmoreland County, Virginia, who was the first President of the United States, who led in the Revolution, and whose opinions gave rise and final form to the very constitution of the country itself. He believed rather in a Washington who never had a visible, physical existence, but whose ideas and spirit dominated the colonies in the Puritan days and still lives. Candidly, one finds it difficult to be patient with men who name themselves "Rationalists" while dispensing with reason and call themselves "thinkers" while giving proof that they are incapable of clearly stating premises or

reaching logical conclusions. There never was a more just and justifiable indictment made against men than I. M. Haldeman brings against these self-named Moderns when he says:

"The Christ they preach never rose from the dead in the body."

"The Christ they preach has no body."

"Their Christ is a boneless and fleshless Christ."

"The Christ of the modern theologian is an immaterial ghost."

"Over the doors of some modern theological institutions might well be written, 'Erected to the Ghost Christ!'"

"Over the pulpits of some modern preachers might be written, 'Here the Ghost Christ is preached.'"

Their message is as baseless as their Christ is bodiless.

These John denominated the Anti-Christ. His language is, "This is the deceiver and anti-Christ. Look to yourselves that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."

A careful study of the Bible will show that the anti-Christ is a person destined to head up the final but fatal rebellion against God, and yet the Sacred Scriptures equally teach that preliminary to His appearance and preparatory unto the same is a whole school of men who shall speak against Jesus Christ, incessantly striving to bring God to

the level of man and exalt man to the level of God. Fundamental to this whole Satanic scheme is the discrediting of the Sacred Scriptures. The man who attempts that is brought to book in John's catalog of the Anti-Christ. Before one can successfully dispute the claim that "Jesus is the Son of God, that God dwelleth in Him and He in God," he must discredit the whole doctrine of inspiration; and yet unless he do that adroitly, he may fail even in the judgment of his coveted followers. What could be more adroit than to insist that the denial of inspiration is not necessarily a denial of a divine Saviour? They tell us that Jesus is the foundation in our religion and whatever else we lose we shall not lose Him. It is written, "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

But back of the foundation laying is work in the quarries. The Scriptures are the quarries of truth. Discredit them and no Christ remains save that moral phantom of the Modern's intellect. If man bow before him or "it," he must concede Mrs. Eddy's contention that our behaviour is determined by the "illusions of mortal mind," and once and forever part company with the whole goodly company of New Testament apostles and teachers, for in the language of John McDowell Leavitt, "That company of notable names knew Jesus Christ by the same sufficient crowning proofs the chemist employs when he analyses salt; the geologist uses

when examining a rock; the astronomer engages when he observes the stars: namely, the senses. These witnesses affirmed that they had seen and heard and touched Jesus both before and after the resurrection. To the visible, the audible and the tangible they gave evidence with their blood before the earth and heaven, and with it they sealed their testimony. Thus their sincerity is unimpeachable, while they witnessed not to a philosophical opinion, not to a scientific explanation, not to a religious dogma, but to the plain perceptible fact that Jesus arose from the dead and ascended unto glory."

The author of our text voices it after this manner, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of Life: that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." He it is that says, "Deny that and you are 'a deceiver and an anti-christ,'" and do become

THE PROPAGANDIST OF INFIDELITY.

"Whosoever goeth onward," as the expression in the original is, "and abideth not in the teachings of Christ, hath not God." It is a significant fact that in the very word here employed, "*proagan,*" and correctly translated "goeth onward," we have the very word "progressive," a term which has been voluntarily assumed by the critics of the times.

They profess to be the solitary progressives of the hour. They speak of themselves as "men who really think." In their advanced circle they claim to include practically "every biblical teacher in the world of any scholarly significance." In youth their mothers must have told them that if they did not think well of themselves no one else would, and forgot to warn them against its vociferous expression. Against the "Thus saith the Lord" of the conservatives they have, in the language of another, set up a sacramental phrase, namely, "Scholarship is agreed." If they ever name an exception they are careful not to name more than one or, at the most, two who are not trailing with this self-elected tribunal.

In spite of the fact that some of us are privileged to minister to many men who represent the most complete scholastic training and who in circles of their respective sciences are widely known and justly honoured, and whose loyalty to the authority of the Scriptures and very deity of Christ is as unswerving as was that of Paul, it is even denied that the church now numbers among its members any considerable company of the "scientifically trained" and "professional classes." We are even asked, "What has become of these college bred men and women who went out from graduating classes into the wide world?" Possibly these Progressives might make a discovery if they sat down and studied the membership roll of the

greater churches of this land which are, without exception, under conservative leadership. If it be true that "in the church at large, not one in fifty members are college graduates," it might bring another revelation than that which our Progressives imagine. The discovery may be made that the conservative churches far exceed this proportion. The speaker knows well one church that multiplies this number many times over, and bears testimony that these college and university men and women are not only among his most capable members, but are notable in their theological conservatism. It is not "education" that is taking the generation away from the church, but it is "scepticism masking under the name of scholarship."

It is as impossible to make science oppose Scripture as it is to compel God to contend against Himself, and if culture oppose the Church, then the child fights its own mother, yea, even the creature its Creator. But "Science falsely so-called" has bespattered the pages of Scripture with interrogation points, and many a college and university student has thereby stumbled. Darwinism, a dogma without scientific data, or, in the words of the famous French scientist, Fabre, "A theory exploited in big words but destitute of even little facts" has undone alike the superficial student of both Scripture and Science. It is impossible to start from false premises and reach true conclusions. If, therefore, we have been able, as

charged, to create a test of church membership that "compels a man under the influence of today's scholarship to abandon not only a life of evil thought and evil action, but also the results of his education," it may be because that education was as far wrong as either his thought or action. The outcome will not only vindicate the church but re-enthrone the Christ.

Exclusive leadership on the part of Moderns is a mere assumption. Mrs. Eddy has illustrated the fact that you may state a thing so positively, and repeat it so often as to bring the superficial to accept it. She took two of the noblest words known to human speech, "Christian" and "Science," and by combining and adopting them has brought the unthinking to imagine her an expert in both, and that in spite of the fact that her writings reveal no knowledge whatever of either.

For fully fifteen years or longer, our self-styled "Moderns" have been asserting their leadership alike in "Science" and "Scripture." Some have supposed that a thing so often spoken must necessarily be so, and so Modernism has accomplished its following. Such students would have been profoundly impressed by the Pharisee's prayer and from the hour of its utterance would have been his devoted followers. The claim of "assured results" has made its easy dupes in both the oil enterprise and the hyper-critical profession. Almost without exception the devotees of that mod-

ern scepticism which discredits the deity of Jesus Christ and questions the authority of the Bible, are either still in their tender youth or else had their thinking fatally twisted before they were far out of their teens. Not once in a hundred instances do mature men turn from conservatism to liberalism; and, in that instance, the rule is that while the man was mature in years, his early education was both poor and partial, and at forty he had only the intellectual equipment of a lad. Who knows a single man in whom ripened years and scholarship have combined to produce a sceptic? But there are scores of men, many of them world-famed, in whom additional study and experience have wrought an utter revolt from the doubts of youth.

But the greater seriousness of all this John does not disregard.

He charges those who reject the Son with having lost the Father also. Unitarianism, masking under the term "Evangelical," proposing to retain God even though Christ be rejected, has no God, unless John be disputed. "He that hath not the Son hath not the Father." "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ hath not God."

The New York Presbytery, in ordaining men who dispute the virgin birth, and thereby deny the inspiration of plain Scripture statement, if it continue to wear the name of "Christian" will do nothing better than cloak an infidel form with a profession of faith. The life of Presbyterianism

as a positive Christian force will depend in no small measure upon its regard for the Cincinnati and Philadelphia Presbyteries' request that such Unitarians be disfellowshipped. The history of the past has provided abundant proof of the utter powerlessness of the Unitarian propaganda. It has created no ministry worthy of mention, it has started no missions that have proven virile, it has established no colleges that play conspicuous part in the educational process. It has effected so few converts from sin to holiness that one sometimes wonders how it keeps courage enough to build an occasional church. Its people are almost universally disciples of Charles Darwin, and with equal unanimity they emasculate the writings of Moses, repudiate the prophecies of Daniel, or give them late date, and laugh to scorn the Apocalypse of John, while Jesus is to them Mary's bastard son. Is it any wonder that John dares to say, "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teachings of Christ hath not God"?

But now what is to be the attitude of true Christian men and women toward all of this? Let John speak again, "If anyone come unto you and bring not this teaching, receive him not into your house, nor bid him Godspeed, for he that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds."

THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE ANTI-CHRIST.

According to John, Christian fraternity is not

for Christ's opponents. One of our best commentators tells us that the phrase, "If anyone come unto you and bring not this teaching, receive him not," looks not to a social reception but rather to a reception into the house of God, unto Christian fellowship. The true Christian will not be unfriendly toward an infidel, nor refuse social fellowship with a sceptic; on the contrary, he will show neighbourliness for every man visiting his door and kindness to any one coming to, or going from the same. But that does not mean his reception into the fellowship of God's family, nor a benediction upon infidelity in God's name. I have no creed to which my neighbours must subscribe, no doctrinal standards to which my acquaintances must come. The Unitarian may be my closest personal friend, and the Universalist my fishing companion, and it is alike my privilege and pleasure to return the bland smile of Mrs. Eddy's disciple. But the fellowship of faith is altogether another thing, and cannot be accorded to any who "bring not the teaching of Christ," "God manifest in the flesh." The moment you create a church that exceeds fellowship in Christ, you introduce into it the seeds of self-destruction.

The weakness of present-day Protestantism is at exactly that point. We are wondering why we are not marking greater progress. We are worrying over subjects of secondary concern. We are searching every nook and corner of church life to

discover the elements of weakness in our work. We are saying that by a "further federation of forces" we will "engender power." The exact opposite is true! We are over-federated now. Our affiliations are our fundamental weaknesses. Better a Gideon's three hundred that believe God and lap the Water of Life from the fountain of His Word than the thousands that now leisurely drink from the springs of scepticism that gush from multiplied schools as water does from the mole holes of the Southland in a wet season.

But John has a further word, *He makes our commendation of sceptics a self-condemnation.* "He that biddeth him Godspeed is partaker of his evil deeds." Frankly do some of us confess "to making it a part of our life work to mark the man who brings not the teaching of Jesus, God manifest in the flesh, and to refuse to recommend him to any church seeking our advice. How can we do otherwise and keep conscience at all? Would we advise you to take into your house as a boarder a man who would alienate your affections from your husband, and by criticisms finally dethrone him from the headship of the family? Can we advise any church to receive as a pastor a man who denies the deity of Jesus, and removes from the headship of the church her own and only rightful Lord? Believing as we do that He is the very God, the one and only basis of hope for time and eternity, the one and only sufficient moral ideal,

and inspiring personality, the one and only Saviour from sin, in fact, the one and only way for the world's redemption, how can we recommend the man who proposes to tear the crown of deity from His brow, dispute His authority over the conscience and His Lordship over life?

John McDowell Leavitt said truly, "Take Jesus from the world and you turn it into gloom. Let Him reign and humanity realises its dream of light and love. In His system and character are all the marks of a divine Messiah. But Jesus false, how black the picture and how inconceivable the consequences. No middle place for this Christ so perfect in character and so matchless in career. If not from the Holy Ghost in the Virgin, His conception a lie! If angels did not sing at His birth, and after temptation and amid agony, and watch at His tomb, narratives of their appearances falsehoods! If no divine voice at His baptism, His ministry of holiness opening with imposture! If no suffering mortals relieved by His touch and word, His miracles of love fabrications! If no power over Hades, His promise to the thief on the cross a deception! If no resurrection and ascension, fraud carried over life into death itself! If no return in power, then no millennium for this world is possible, and the future will grow increasingly bloody and eventuate in the darkest of nights. He who mars the Jesus of the Bible unmakes mankind. He who blots the sentences of

sacred Scripture, flings a blackness over future history"

Commend him as a teacher? Ask a church to appoint him to its leadership? Write letters, dexterously dodging the facts involved, in aiding him to cover up his unfaith long enough to be comfortably seated and begin to uncover his scepticism, and thereby break the hearts of his aged parishioners and destroy the faith of his youthful ones? Never! For this would be to be a partaker of his evil deeds. The compromise of truth is a crime against Christ!

The crisis is on! The injunction of Joshua lives again, "Choose ye this day!"

"He that hath felt the spirit of the highest,
Cannot confound or doubt Him, or deny;
Yea, with one breath, O world, though thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I."

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